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SHORT STORIES
A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 618. FOR WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 3RD, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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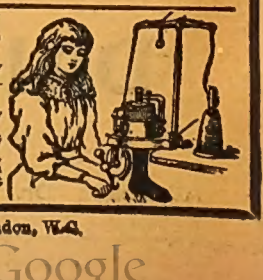

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SHORT STORIES

No. 618.] For the Week Ending November 3rd, 1900. [One Penny.

THE LITTLE HARLEQUIN.

A few evenings ago I was sitting in my room, together with a few friends. We had been reading aloud a drama written by one of us, and were amusing ourselves with a discussion as to what constituted the most tragic circumstances that can possibly arise in life, that would be a fitting setting for a hero of a drama. My friend B., an unusually keen observer, who waited, as was his wont in a discussion, until everyone else had had his say, to put the question in a new light, by the aid of a few words, at last remarked, that in dwelling upon the complicated and tragic conflicts of the mind, we had forgotten the most simple and tragic ones of all.

The most tragic human being is the one who, in spite of unusual mental attainments, is brought low by the consciousness of great physical ugliness. Then, when we all protested against this "idealising of a most inferior sort of tragedy," based upon bodily peculiarities, he said he was sure we had again misunderstood him, and so he told us the following little Italian story, for the truth of which he vouched:

"In a tiny tower in the vicinity of Modena once lived a curious young man. The inhabitants at first avoided him but later grew to look upon him as a sort of official clown, whose duty it was to make them laugh. No one in the town knew exactly who or what he was. His real name was unpronounceable. He had appeared suddenly on the scene, had rented two rooms and lived quietly in retirement.

"The old woman with whom he lodged said that he had a quantity of books, and that he spent the entire day reading or writing. She had a funny story about him, too, that she was fond of telling. When he first came to her and saw the large mirror in his bedroom, he fell into a sudden rage, and, seizing the wash-basin, hurled it at the mirror so that it broke and the pieces fell all about the room. But what did that matter? Of course, he had paid her for both mirrror and basin (by which she had incidentally made a good bargain), and had only stipulated that there must never be a mirror in his room again.

"Every time this story was told in the town, someone, particularly among the young girls, began to giggle. It was so plain why he could not stand a mirror—he was so terribly ugly! His figure was very small and lank, but he had a huge hump on his back which seemed to contract his chest by its weight and to make an upright position in walking impossible, as it was incredible that the long, thin legs, that the children declared clattered at every step, as if they were wooden, could carry such a body. His arms were almost as bad as his legs, reaching nearly to his knees, which gave his whole body an ape-like appearance. There was no trace of a neck to be found. His gigantic head sat directly between his shoulders. This was perhaps the most peculiar feature of all. It was very large at the top and very small at the bottom, so that it looked as if a wedge had been driven down between the shoulders.

"This likeness was probably increased by the fact that the face was drawn to one side and distorted by pain. To be sure, the large, thin, hooked nose was directly in the middle, but that only made the whole worse, for it divided the face into two entirely different halves. The mouth was much too far to the left, and the forehead slanted upwards from left to right, which was made all the more conspicuous by reason of its being particularly high and arched. Naturally a bristly confusion of ragged hair and a preposterous number of unusually deep wrinkles did not tend to make the face more attractive. The large, dark eyes might have done so; but they were really the most uncanny part of the man. Sometimes very sad, sometimes very fierce, and often there emanated from them such unrestrained glances, that had they come from another body, would have made every girl's heart beat; but with his appearance that was, of course, impossible. For let him do what he would, walk, sit, stand, recline, speak, keep silence, be sad, angry, resigned or full of enthusiasm, it was impossible to help laughing at him. When he walked he looked like an inverted pendulum. When he stood still, with his arms hanging limp at his side, as was generally the case, he looked, seen from a distance, like a colossal cropper pigeon, it being impossible to distinguish his breast any way off.

"And one can easily understand that the emotions of his soul, which mirrored themselves so closely and sensibly on his countenance, produced the most ridiculous impression of all, for in such an uneven mirror the most glorious thing must appear frightfully distorted, as everyone knows who has ever looked in a convex or concave glass, and laughed himself half to death at the disgusting contortion of his own body, or still more at those of his acquaintances.

"I should like to know, however, if you would still laugh if one of these same contortions should stick to you? At all events, the inhabitants of the little town in

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Seizing the wash-basin he hurled it at the mirror.

which our story is laid did laugh. Although he had been there two months, no one but his landlady had ever heard him speak; and she said that he had such a wonderfully beautiful, soft voice that people who listened to him could scarcely help crying, and were forced to keep their eyes closed. They would have liked to know what sort of a man he really was, especially the young people, and so they tried in every way to get information in regard to him. Soon they succeeded.

"One afternoon, when he was walking through the street, carrying a small package to the post-office, a piece of paper with writing on it, stuck out of his coat pocket. A small boy, noted for his boldness, succeeded in stealing the paper from the pocket, and handed it over to his elder brothers and sisters. The elders were charmed at the chance to satisfy their curiosity, for the paper was written all over, and without doubt by himself.

"At the top was the date, September 15, just a week before. Then it continued:

"'Is it fate that makes man always regard that which is for ever closed to him as the most desirable of all things? That he must always love and admire most that which he lacks altogether? Or am I in this also an exception, as I am bodily?

"'Oh, when will there be an end to this terrible flight from the world and my own ugliness? When shall I learn to be content with the treasures which I have, and to forget my own miserable unimportant limitations? Am I the only one who has no mercy on himself? All other people forget their afflictions and are proud of their good points, and I do the opposite. Why then? Why?

"'And has my flight been of any good? Oh, these horrible two years of flight from one neighbourhood to another! And during them always again and again the awaking to this horrible reality of the body that drives me back into my misery—the misery of a man who throws his treasures to the winds and tries to conquer by means of his defects. Is there then not enough irony in the world?

"'Asceticism, asceticism! Death of things of the body—a wonderful principle! I only know that asceticism and the breeding of unrestrained ideas are one and the same. And why can I not love something more than a mere spiritual love? Oh, but I can; but not be loved in return. Can the "beautiful great soul" which I possess, take the place of the glorious body that I desire? How would a sketch do of Thersites as Don Juan, an attempt at a self-vivisection, by a person made insane by bodily defects?

"'I believe one is finally too cowardly to take leave of life, because he would still like to enjoy that which is impossible. For example, I have in mind a man who will never die of hunger, because he would first like to write another Faust. It is the same story with me. I cannot be beautiful, and would yet celebrate the triumph of the body—for what else is love? And I cannot die until then.'

"The good people could not understand much of this diary; but one thing they were able to read in it—he was in love! That was killingly ridiculous. Now they knew it, and everyone whispered to everyone else: 'He is in love.' A band of rude schoolchildren called after him down the street: 'There he goes; he is in love!' at which he fell into such a rage that everyone who saw him screamed with laughter.

"For three weeks the Teatro Classico had been in town, and had had great success. To be sure the performances were not very classic, and people were surprised that 'he' went every evening, being himself so much funnier than the plays. He never laughed in the theatre, not even when the rest of the audience were convulsed with amusement.

"The Harlequin was so comical, enormously tall and thin, who impressed people mostly (though, of course, without intending it) by his never knowing what to do with his arms and legs. If he were walking on the level he tripped over his own feet; if he went up the stairs, he slipped on his hands. The only fat thing about the entire man was his red nose (he was a great drinker), and the only thing connected with him on which you might waste pity was his audience. The whole town was soon saying that Harlequin's acting was perfectly tasteless, repeating the words of Maestro Poccini, who now played the dance music, but who had once been in the orchestra of the Milan Opera for a month.

"The female portion of the town had a regular hatred for the little leading lady of the theatre, who was a sweet little creature, called Lala, sixteen years old, small and dainty, with charming little feet, a slender throat, large childish eyes, full of wonder, and black hair. As she laughed often, for every one exerted himself to be witty before her, her delicious, little, shining, sharp teeth were also visible. She was always in a good humour; it was only seldom that she sat still, with her hands in her lap, dreaming of sad things, perhaps of her parents' early deaths and her loneliness among strangers, which even her gay profession was not quite able to drive away.

"Lala was so attractive that she soon had the *entrée* to many of the houses in the town, particularly after people had learnt from the director of her sad lot, and knew that she was a thoroughly good girl in spite of many temptations. The conversation often turned upon him. No one knew his name, and she laughed with the others at the ridiculous creature who appeared at the theatre every evening, who never applauded, and who wrote whole nights through.

"Lala knew this, for living on the opposite side of the street she could see into his room when she went to bed at night, thanks to a beautiful lamp, which had no equal in the town, a lamp with a woman for a pedestal. She had seen it plainly, and this lamp often burned all night through, for she often saw it when she awoke. But he was terribly comical. She could never help laughing

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when she saw him. He should have been Harlequin—the other smelt so of brandy.

"Aye, that would have been just the thing. He should have been the Harlequin, and then the theatre would have been twice as popular. Such a curious man he was! He often wrote all night long! And the pedestal of his lamp was a girl. He was in love, too. What interesting things do happen! It is after all worth while living.

"'He' was scarcely ever to be seen now, except in the theatre, leaving the house only after dark. Something in him seemed to have changed. He walked so much more slowly and haltingly than before, as if he were tired or continually thinking of something that gave him no rest.

"The audience at the theatre paid almost as much attention to him as to the actors on the stage, and they noticed that he turned first red and then white, and that he breathed heavily and trembled when Lala was playing; and his eyes rested on her with such an appealing and glowing expression that all who saw him had trouble to smother their laughter. How amusing the theatre was!

"One fine day the tall Harlequin, reeking still of brandy, was found dead in his bed. The doctor said that he had died of heart failure. He was no great loss to the company, but the director was obliged to engage another Harlequin and the theatre was closed for three days out of respect to the dead.

"On the afternoon after the old Harlequin's death, another event of great interest took place in the town. 'He' went crazy! At least so his landlady declared. She said he had behaved most curiously of late. He often wept aloud, and stamped his feet; again he swore and threw heavy books about the room. He had not been to bed for three days in succession, but had spent the entire night writing, and then early in the morning he had sent a small package to the post, which she believed contained paper. She had been quite worried about him once.

"For two days and nights he had written continuously, covering a great mass of paper, then had tossed about on his bed for a few hours sobbing, and at last, laughing horribly, he had burned a whole pile of the paper on which he had written.

"Things must have come to a pretty pass with him. He had ordered a long mirror in which he could see himself at full length, and he had laughed and sprung about, talked and sung the greatest nonsense, and gesticulated in such a manner that seemed a physical impossibility to such a body.

"She had been terribly frightened, but it had been so funny after all that she could not help watching him, and he had asked her if she were pleased with it all.

"But curious things do happen. The director of the theatre announced that he would give no more performances, but would move to another town.

"He told no one his reasons for doing this, not even Lala. He only said to her that it was on account of the new Harlequin, who was the most wonderful Harlequin possible and that she would be able to play with him better even than before.

"So the entire troupe moved to another town, but it seemed strange to Lala that the new Harlequin had not yet put in his appearance.

"At the same time he had paid the rent for his rooms six months in advance, and leaving all his things behind him, he went away.

"The last and principal number on the programme was a love scene between Lala and Harlequin; but neither Lala nor any other member of the troupe had seen the new Harlequin, and Lala did not even know what she was to say in this new *rôle*. The director grinned as he remarked that this was not at all necessary, that it would go off all the better.

"The last number came. Lala, with a slight tinge of embarrassment, very becoming to her, stepped on to the stage and looked anxiously about her. The new Harlequin rushed at her from the opposite wing of the stage, and threw himself at her feet. It was 'he.' She screamed aloud from astonishment and fear, and trembled all over. The audience burst into applause.

"And now an improvised love scene unfolded itself on the stage, that convulsed the audience with laughter. After Lala had recovered from her terror her natural cleverness aided her to play her part of the beauty who refused so terrible a lover. He, too, made it easy for her. How wonderfully she was playing! She was delighted with herself, and, for the first time in her life, was greatly interested in her own acting, and felt really inspired.

"He acted and spoke so naturally that her words and gestures came of themselves. It was glorious! How he wept and implored and laughed and swore! All would have been so touching in a tragedy, and yet with what art he turned every emotion, no matter how fervent or grave it might be, into something comic, so that each moment the crowded house fell into a fresh paroxysm of laughter.

"The play was over. He had been rejected, and had hurried away in desperation to hang himself. The applause was tremendous.

"Sweets, flowers, parasols, bouquets, gold pieces, and wreaths fell in a heap on the stage. Lala and Harle-

A band of rude school-children called after him down the street.

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The new Harlequin threw himself at her feet.

quin had to bow again and again until the director excused them on the plea of fatigue.

"It was easy to see that both were pretty well exhausted, but what else could be expected after such fatiguing acting? They were both so tired that they did not attend the unusually liberal supper which the director gave in their honour that evening. He could easily afford to do so, since the theatre was already sold out for a fortnight ahead.

"Lala and Harlequin still sat in the green-room, each on a box. He seemed greatly excited and trembled, and kept looking before him with an indescribable expression, half-sad, half-glad, which, however, on account of the metamorphosis which every emotion of his face was subject to, would have caused great merriment to any one who might have seen it.

"But Lala saw nothing. She held her handkerchief before her face, and sobbed and wept bitterly for a long while. At last he rose and stroked her hair, saying in a wonderfully soft voice, and in a quivering, low tone:

"'Lala, my poor child, go to bed, won't you? or you'll be ill. You are so worked up.'

"Then he walked slowly to his room, which was quite near. Curious must have been the thoughts that filled his brain, for he did not hear the applause of the audience that stood in the street waiting to see him go home with the expectation of another amusing performance. The manner with which he crossed the street, the fanciful, earnest expression and the tired movements were wonderfully done, and the applause followed him as far as his house.

"He sat at the window, weeping long and softly. Above in the heavens the moon and countless stars were shining, and he felt within himself the same horrible loneliness which separates one star from another. Between him and the other star, for which he longed, there was a frightful icy space that nothing could bridge over.

"He wept, and below in the street the gallery gods shouted up to him, the king of all merrymakers. It was some time before they became quiet. Then he rose, lit the lamp and took a locked book out of a drawer and wrote in it with a firm hand:

"'November 17th. To-day I have thrown my soul to the rabble that it might devour it, and in its death-struggle it awoke another soul. How long will Lala have a soul?'

"This was another leaf from his diary that the citizens of the town would not have understood, but as Lala's name occurred in it, they might have inferred from that that he was in love with her.

"And Lala? She could not tell what had happened to her. She wept half the night through, and prayed that she might be endowed with this great talent and wonderful power that made her now so sad and so full of longing. And then again, when she pictured him to herself she shook with laughter, but curiously enough, her laughter was no longer the same as of old, and she was ashamed of it as soon as it was over. She slept very badly.

"The next morning she found about two dozen magnificent bouquets awaiting her when she awoke. They all came from gentlemen in the town who expressed their admiration for her on the visiting cards which accompanied the flowers. They gave her great pleasure, and she was happy all day, chatting with her fellow-actors and actresses, who were all jealous of her, but appeared exceedingly affectionate, and made jokes about Harlequin, who was nowhere to be seen; and naturally she laughed with the others, and told them everything she knew about him.

"Now began a delightful life for her. She received flowers and jewellery daily, and was invited to entertainments which she was delighted to attend in company with the director. Harlequin had refused every invitation from the first, and was never seen outside of the theatre.

"Lala often sat alone now in her room doing nothing. She did not like to go out alone, and she had no need to learn her *rôles* by heart or rehearse. Harlequin improvised everything, and so wonderfully that she was able to play just as well as if she had studied every word and gesture carefully.

"When she sat thus, her charming, wondering, childish eyes staring before her into vacancy, thinking how she would play this or that, as she was fond of doing, being inspired with the idea of sometime becoming a great actress, she would ask herself how it happened that every time after she had acted with Harlequin she felt so sad and yet so happy, though she might have been amusing herself all the day until then with silly jokes, and though these improvised pieces were really the most comic things one could imagine. But she did not find out what the cause of it all really was.

"Only one thing was clear. That Harlequin must have something to do with it, and that he himself was not nearly so ridiculous as he always appeared. At first she talked very little with him.

"He did not seem to care for it, and she, too, was better pleased when she could enjoy listening to his voice without looking at him, for he was so comical that the most earnest word which he might utter could not but seem funny. She had told him this once innocently and without embarrassment, and had begged his pardon in case she ever laughed when he had no intention of being

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ridiculous. She had said this to him without glancing at him, one evening after the play, when she had been talking gaily for quite a while with some fine gentlemen, and he had advised her to be careful of such people. Her words had made him very sad, and he had asked her in a low tone:

"'So to you, too, then, I am only a sort of amusement machine? And can you not realize either that I am a man with a heart and not merely a Harlequin? Is it true that you cannot stand a few hours with me any more than the others?'

"She marvelled at his words at first, scarcely understanding them. Then she glanced up at him. He was sitting in the dim lamplight, his legs in the shadow, his face too indistinctly visible, and it suddenly flashed across her mind that he looked like a large black egg standing on end, and this ridiculous idea was so overpowering that she laughed right in his face.

"He grew crimson, and began to sob with anger, and sprang up, his arms hanging loosely down by his side, and clinched his hands convulsively. After standing thus a while, a picture of desperate rage, such as might be exhibited by a murderer who was listening to his death sentence, he said softly, with choking voice:

"'And it was for you alone that I became a Harlequin.'

"Then he left, not waiting for an answer.

"All night long Lala tried to make up her mind whether she ought to be amused or ashamed.

"The following day she begged his pardon—with averted face—and after that she talked oftener with him. Her fellow actors and actresses, and more particularly the gentlemen who frequented the side scenes, began to make jokes about 'her good taste,' and to tease her about Harlequin, so that she was often on the point of crying with anger, and it grew worse day by day.

"She could not defend him; it would have been silly, and how could she help his being so ridiculous? And then all their jokes fitted him so perfectly! Why should she not make fun of him as the others did?

"She did so, and amused herself royally with her girl friends and some gentlemen who seemed greatly interested in her, and who gave her all sorts of costly things. It was only after she had played with 'him' that none could make her enjoy the rest of the evening.

"Indeed, Harlequin seemed to know all the details of her life, and to be always watching her. He now took for his subject in the theatre the jealousy and impotent rage of a deceived and rejected lover, and he was almost funnier in this than in his earlier scenes.

"She was standing one evening before the beginning of the performance, behind the wings with a gentleman who was endeavouring to persuade her, by all means in his power, to take supper with him that evening, promising her that she would be sure to enjoy it. She had certainly no intention of accepting, for it would not do for her to take supper alone with a man, so she said to him, with a saucy smile, which he naturally took for an acceptance: 'Perhaps.'

"Then for the first time she noticed that Harlequin was standing beside her and had overheard it all. But what did that matter? She did not explain. She only wondered why he looked so pale, as pale almost as a corpse, she thought, and a cold shudder ran down her back.

"That day, for the first time in her life, she really feared the scene, and yet there was no reason for doing so. To the audience it seemed as if they both played better than ever before. The deadly pallor of the deceived lover was simply grand, and the secret anxiety pictured on her face was truly beautiful, and the way she avoided looking at him was delicious.

"She could not stand this deathly paleness, could not look at him. If she had only explained matters to him! And now, whenever she was not looking directly at him, it seemed to her again and again, and more and more surely every second, that every word he uttered was thoroughly in earnest.

"'Must I then die on account of thee?' he said to her with touching softness.

"The audience applauded loudly, but Lala suddenly began to tremble, and uttering a terrible cry she sprang from the stage into the wings as if pursued.

"At midnight, after talking over an hour with Lala, Harlequin went to his room. All she had said was:

"'Now I am only the more afraid of you.'

"The lamp in his room burned all night long. His neighbour in the next room, the director, heard him sobbing for a long while, and then heard him say some words in a foreign tongue, slowly and with wonderful expression. Then everything was quiet.

"But the lamp still burned when the bright morning sun laughed in at the window. His diary lay open on the table in his room. The last words he had written in it were:

"'Now the soul to which I awakened is dead. I follow it.'

"By the side of it lay a thick, sealed letter to Lala, a package of papers and an empty bottle. On the bed lay Harlequin—dead! He no longer looked ridiculous. An exceedingly touching expression rested on the pale features of a martyr.

Lala threw herself on dear little Harlequin's body, sobbing piteously.

"When Lala was led to the bed she threw herself on dear little Harlequin's body, sobbing piteously, and murmured hopelessly:

"'And, after all, I did love him!'

"The package of papers was taken to the police, so that the cause of his death might be known, and Lala learnt that she had driven the greatest Italian poet of the present day to his death."

ALEXANDER MAR.

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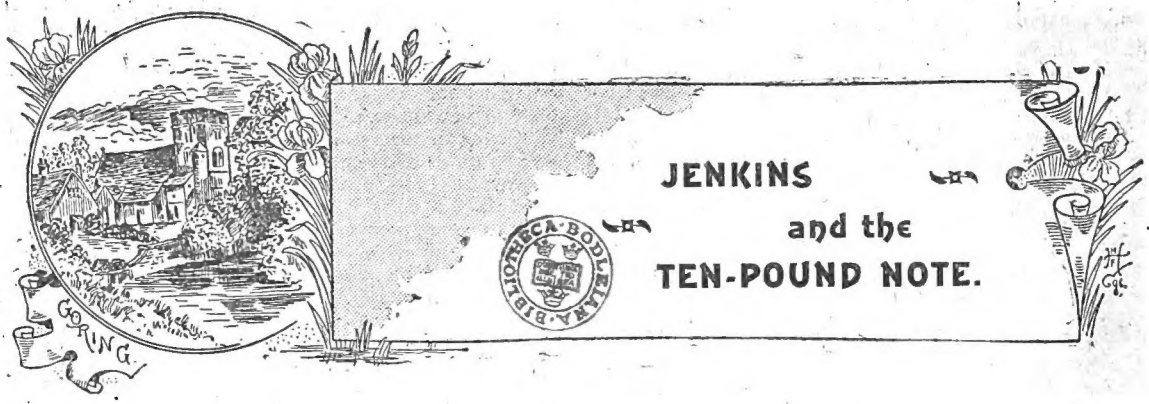

I WAS sitting quietly in my room after a hard day's work, smoking and glancing at an evening paper.

There was a roaring fire and the howl of the wind outside intensified the very soothing feeling of comfort and ease which was creeping over me.

Mrs. Gum had cleared away the tea things, fiddled a bit about the fire and then left me.

I was in fact just beginning to enjoy a nice quiet evening when I heard a rap at the door and in walked Jenkins.

I didn't move, I didn't welcome him and I sincerely hoped he would take no notice of me, but just settle himself down comfortably with a book and leave me in peace.

I hoped all this, but as he entered I could see that there was a wild look of excitement in his eye which I knew of old.

Jenkins, I told myself, had got hold of some project, some wild scheme or other, and my quiet evening would be trampled down, jumped upon, torn asunder. I could see it in his eye.

He approached me kind of stealthily. He then tapped me on the shoulder in a way which positively made me shudder, for it had the Scotland Yard touch about it.

Then after looking carefully round, he drew a copy of *Pearson's Weekly* from his pocket, and looking at me as if he would read my very inmost thoughts, said in a sepulchral voice, "Have you got that Ten-Pound Note?"

I was fully alarmed at this. True, I owed Jenkins a trifle or so; but a ten-pound note, why a ten-pound note is quite another matter.

"It's all right, old chap," I said, thinking to soothe him. "It is all right; just you lie down on the sofa for five minutes or so and it will pass off." But Jenkins took no notice of my advice.

"Then you have not got the Ten-Pound Note?" he said, with a sigh which verily seemed to come from the bottom of his boots.

I quite thought now that Jenkins was either drunk or delirious.

"Oh, yes," I said, wishing to humour him. "Oh, yes, I've got it all right. But sit down, there's a good chap, and you'll be better presently."

"You've got it!" Jenkins shrieked. "You say you have really and truly got it!" he yelled.

"Poor Jenkins, it is worse with him than I thought," I said to myself.

But Jenkins had caught me by the collar of the coat, and waving a copy of *Pearson's Weekly* high in the air, he shouted:

"Then hand it over and let us make a night of it. You are just the best man I have met to-day."

I got up quietly from my chair, for Jenkins seemed quite far enough gone to need a straight waistcoat, and I was debating whether to make a bolt for the door or to ring the bell for Mrs. Gum.

So I patted him on the back, and said: "Don't mind me, old chap! Just you sit down. You will feel much better—ever so much better—if you will only sit down quietly for a few minutes."

The wild look in Jenkins' eye positively frightened me, and I edged for the door, thinking to run for it and summon a policeman before worse happened.

But Jenkins was too quick for me. He seemed to have the lunatic's instinct, and before I had got a yard from him he rushed to the door and put his back against it.

"No you don't!" he said with a glare that made my knees tremble. "I'll have it out of you before I've done with you," he continued. "You had best give it up, for it belongs to me, and I'm not going to stand any hanky-panky."

A cold perspiration began to break out upon my forehead. Poor Jenkins, I thought. Poor, old, quiet, sedate, easy-going Jenkins! What an end to our friendship. An absolutely raving, murderous lunatic.

I had better humour him, though, I thought.

"It is all right, old chap," I said, "make yourself quite easy about it. If you will just wait here half-a-minute, I will go and fetch it. I have left it upstairs."

Jenkins looked at me doubtfully. "All right," he then said, "go upstairs and get it; I will come with you." I dodged Jenkins in the hall; or, to speak accurately I quickly put my leg behind him, gave him a push, and then made for the street like greased lightning.

I didn't wait for a hat, I wanted the nearest policeman, badly.

Jenkins recovered himself in no time.

"Stop him! Stop him!" he shouted as I sped down the street.

"He's raving mad; look out for yourselves," I said hurriedly to the people, who came rushing from every quarter at the sound of Jenkins' wild shouts.

Soon I espied a policeman and fairly rushed into his arms.

"He's mad, absolutely mad!" I shouted.

Jenkins was close upon my heels and by this time a crowd had collected.

"Hold him tight, Bobby!" Jenkins shouted, "Don't

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let him go whatever you do and I will give you a sovereign of it."

The policeman, upon hearing this, made a sudden grab for me, and held me like a vice.

"He's got the Ten-Pound Note!" gasped Jenkins.

"What!" shouted the bobby, "What! What!" shrieked the crowd rushing at me.

If Jenkins had told them I was a pro-Boer, or even Kruger himself, I could not have received more attention.

Then there was a regular flutter of *Pearson's Weeklies* in the air and with a regular whoop of "Have you got that Ten-Pound Note?" they came for me like one man.

"It is my Note, I saw him first!" shouted Jenkins, trying to force his way through the crowd.

"Rats!" said a burly coalheaver giving Jenkins a dig in the ribs with his elbow, "first come, first served," he continued, making a way for himself through the crowd with an ease which seemed to come naturally.

Something seemed to be troubling the policeman. He held me with a grip of iron with one hand, but there was an agonised expression upon his face, as if he had colic, and he was searching in his tunic for something most diligently.

I was glad to perceive that the crowd were fighting, happily, amongst themselves. Everyone seemed most anxious, for some unknown reason, to get at me, but equally anxious that no one else should touch me.

The coalheaver was laying about him manfully, and I would have enjoyed it all immensely but for the fact that I felt something would soon happen to me. I tried to wriggle from the policeman's grip.

"Half-a-minute," he said; "I have nearly got it." Then a most beautiful and bewitching smile stole across the weather-beaten face of that guardian of the law, and as he drew forth a copy of *Pearson's Weekly* from his breast he said, in dulcet and sweet tones, as if he were proposing to a cook: "Have you got that Ten-Pound Note?"

I could have stood and gazed upon the peaceful, happy, loving, and tender expression of that policeman's face for an hour, and would have thanked him at the end with tears of gratitude in my eyes.

Oh! the sweetness, the unutterable tenderness and yearning, the whole-souled gladness that was expressed in that one look.

As I looked upon his face it was as if I saw a land of hope, of joy; a land full of all that was good and noble stretched out before me.

But a rough shake of the shoulder disturbed me, and the whole expression of the policeman changed.

"Now then, mister, turn it out—that Ten-Pound Note! Be quick, now!" he said threateningly, as the coalheaver also laid a hand on my other shoulder.

"Everyone seems to think I am a millionaire," I said, "unless it is that Colney Hatch is let loose."

"Don't you take no notice of 'im, mister," said the coalheaver.

He then sidled most lovingly up to me, and in a voice that was as tender and soothing as that of a mother to her first child, he said:

"Have you got that Ten-Pound Note?"

Who could have resisted his winning little ways? But I gently patted the coalheaver on the head and said, as kindly as I could:

"Never mind me, old chap; just you go home and sleep it off."

"What-d'yer-mean! Now then, none of yer gimes wi' me. Don't yer try to come none of yer monkey on me, Mister bloomin' whatsyername, so I'm telling yer! D'y'ere?" said the coalheaver, shaking his copy of *Pearson's Weekly* in my face and looking most ferocious.

It was just about here that I lost my temper and began to say things.

"Just shut up your row and let me speak," I said.

"You hand over that Tenpun' Note," said the coalheaver.

"You had better do it quietly, Mister," said the policeman.

"Hand you a rope to go and hang yourselves with, would suit you better," I said, getting cross.

"What is the matter with you all?" I continued. "You silly idiots, do you think the millenium has come, or do you take me for a millionaire? Here am I, a peaceable man, driven out of my house by a raving lunatic called Jenkins, and then surrounded by a varied assortment of howling madmen, all shrieking and fighting for Ten-Pound Notes as if I were cram-jam full of them to the brim.

"You silly, addlepated asses, you doubly-distilled——"

But the coalheaver interrupted me just as I was warming to the subject.

"Ain't you one of them Pearson chaps?" said he.

"My name is Theophilus Biggs," I shouted, "and if there are any Ten-Pound Notes flying around just put me on the track."

That coalheaver was not a bad chap after all. He said he would have a drink at my expense and tell me all about it. He did, and that was the first I had heard of it.

When I got back to my rooms that night I found Jenkins very much the worse for wear, sitting in my armchair drinking my whiskey, whilst Mrs. Gum was patching him up with sticking-plaister.

"Hello!" I said.

But Jenkins never answered a word; he just sighed, and poured himself out another glass of whiskey.

"Buck up, old chap," I said encouragingly. "I quite forgive you; I am going to hunt Ten-Pound Notes myself."

"You forgive me, do you?" said Jenkins. "And that is the man I called 'friend!'" he continued, sighing deeply. "Theophilus, I thought better of you."

"Jenkins," I said, "you look hurt."

"I feel it," said Jenkins; "that fool of a coalheaver was like an Indian on the war-path. But I mean to get it, if it kills me. Why, man, I have already spent half of it. I gave my tailor an order for a new suit yesterday, I feel so sure of getting it."

"Well, look here, Jenkins," I said; "I'll help you, and if I get it I'll stand you a supper."

So we shook hands on the matter, and, after finishing my whiskey, Jenkins left.

I met Jenkins early next morning. We had agreed to take the day off and return richer by ten pounds, which we did not think bad pay for a day's work.

I left everything in Jenkins' hands as regards our movements, and followed him like a lamb. Anyone noticing Jenkins' furtive glances from right to left, his cat-like crawl, his whole sleuth-hound appearance, in fact, would have set him down either for a Sioux Indian on the warpath or a criminal of the deepest dye. I kept at a respectful distance from him—he looked too desperate, too weird-like.

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The first man Jenkins tackled gave one look at him, and then bolted for his life.

I told Jenkins that he would have to assume a very much milder demeanour and accompany his question with a kind of sylph-like smile.

He said he would and he did; but his smile was too sylph-like, it was absolutely idiotic.

One old gentleman gave him a penny and another man gave him an envelope which seemed to send an electric thrill through Jenkins.

But upon opening it he discovered an advertisement for So and So's tea; and then he sighed.

So we strolled along and then an idea occurred to Jenkins.

"Look here, Biggs old man," he said, "I'm thinking we are on the wrong tack. So far we have been asking the most likely looking persons and I think now it is the unlikely looking ones we should ask."

So he stopped a 'bus and put the vital question to the conductor.

That conductor told Jenkins many things in many words, which rather discouraged him; in fact, he told me the things that conductor said really hurt him.

What possessed Jenkins to try and knock a cab-horse over I don't know. He says he didn't try to knock the cab-horse over; he didn't see any confounded cab-horse.

It was like this. We were walking quietly along, when suddenly Jenkins darted across the street, and the next thing I saw was a kind of mixture, half Jenkins, half cab-horse. However, they put Jenkins together, so to say, and, whilst sipping some brandy and water, he explained.

"I'm sure, he was one of them. He had Ten Pounds written all over him, so to speak, and but for that silly cab-driver, I should have got it. Of course, he has gone now, and here am I, hat smashed, coat torn, and one mass of bruises from head to foot."

"You are certainly enjoying yourself, Jenkins," I said.

Whilst I thus spake, Jenkins suddenly dropped his glass, and, leaving me to pay, rushed out.

I followed, and was just in time to see him almost throw himself upon a well-dressed looking man.

I saw Jenkins pull out his copy of *Pearson's Weekly*, and that was all, for the man beckoned Jenkins to go up a side street, and so I waited.

Jenkins came back in a little over five minutes.

"I thought I had him," he said sadly, "but it was no go. He was only fooling me!"

I asked Jenkins to tell me all about it, and he did.

"When I went up to him and asked him the vital question, he kind of smiled, and said, 'Come up this street, and let me see the date of the paper; it will be quieter up here.'

"So I, of course, followed him and held my copy of *Pearson's Weekly* up, pointing to the date.

"He seemed to study it for a minute or two, and then saying:

"'I'm only fooling you, old chap; good-day, wish you luck,' he left me."

"Rather curious," I remarked, and then I happened to notice that Jenkins' watch-chain was missing.

"Where's your watch, Jenkins?" I said.

Jenkin's face when he next looked at me was a study. Jenkins said very little but what he did say was to the point.

Poor old Jenkins! All the spirit seemed knocked out of him, and it was a weary man I helped into the Twopenny Tube.

We were going straight home and not caring how soon we got there.

Ours is a quiet out-of-the-way looking street and for a stranger to pass down it is a rare event. In fact I prided myself upon being able to give a full account of the business of everyone who passed my sitting-room windows from sunrise to sunset; so did Jenkins.

But I thought Jenkins was too limp, too thoroughly done up to know even where he was.

But there was life in the old dog yet. For without a word of warning he rushed across the street and I saw he had got hold of a stranger, the first I had seen in that street for many a day.

Jenkins kissed that man and I don't think the man liked it.

He then hugged him and proceeded to dance round him. But the man refused even to have a drink at Jenkins's expense. He just handed him an envelope, about which there was certainly no mistake, and then, after congratulating Jenkins, he left him.

Jenkins was another man. He even put his arms round my landlady, Mrs. Gum, and kissed her.

"This makes up for everything," he shouted, holding the Envelope aloft, and the smile that shone upon Jenkins's face was the smile he used to wear in childhood's happy days.

If you ever happen to meet Jenkins he will tell you all about it. Since getting that £10 Note he has missed trains, gone past his destination, gone without his lunch, and even missed appointments, all through trying to tell everyone all about it.

As Jenkins left me that night he said:

"That's number one I have got; I want you to keep count of them as I get them, old chap."

W. St. G. Drennan.

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Result of Competition No. 1.

As no one got all the results absolutely correct, the £100 has been divided among the following competitors: J. F. THORNHILL, 9 Brierley Avenue, Ardwick, Manchester; JAS. TAYLOR, 27 Stevens Road, West Ham; GEO. HUNT, 90 Arodene Road, Brixton Hill; T. LEA, 18 Marlton Street, West Kensington; W. BARKER, 41 Frostoms Road, Workington; H. JOHNSON, Dyehouse, Woodchester, Stroud; E. A. WORLAND, 5 Noel Street, Islington, N.; JAS. PARKER, 25½ Hanover Buildings, Tooley Street, S.E.; F. S. GOODALL, 12 Nottingham Street, Cardiff; MISS FRY, 89 St. Albans Buildings, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.; F. NEWTON, 381 Commercial Road, Portsmouth; F. W. HOCKADAY, 2 Belmont Terrace, Bideford, Devon; P. O. MCINTIRE, 64 Richards Terrace, Roath, Cardiff; CHAS. E. WACOGNE, 50 Meanley Road, Manor Park, Essex (two shares); JAS. POTTER, 13 Alma Cottages, Wealdstone, Harrow; F. E. LADD, 3 Brighton Square, Rathgar, Dublin; J. LLOYD, 20 Allens Road, Ponders End.

The football matches named below will be played on Saturday, November 3rd. To the competitor from whom we receive the correct result of all these matches we will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED POUNDS. If no competitor gives all the results correctly, the HUNDRED POUNDS will be awarded to the person or persons most nearly correct.

FOOTBALL COUPON No. 4. Matches to be played on Saturday, November 3rd.

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1 NOTTS COUNTY v. 2 SHEFFIELD UNITED																			
1 WOLVERHAMPTON W. v. 2 LIVERPOOL																			
1 SHEFFIELD WEDNES. v. 2 ASTON VILLA																			
1 SUNDERLAND v. 2 NOTTS FOREST																			
1 DERBY COUNTY v. 2 BURY																			
1 PRESTON NORTH END v. 2 NEWCASTLE UNITED																			
1 BOLTON WANDERERS v. 2 MANCHESTER CITY																			
1 BURSLEM PORT VALE v. 2 GRIMSBY TOWN																			
1 SOUTHAMPTON v. 2 MILLWALL																			
1 SWINDON v. 2 READING																			

The clubs engaged in each match are numbered 1 and 2. To fill in the above coupon, insert in the space provided the number of the club selected to win. To predict a draw, put X. THE FIRST COUPON IS FREE. A penny stamp must be inclosed for each coupon used in addition to the free one. Nine extra coupons may be used for Sixpence, and eighteen extra coupons for One Shilling.

I send in this coupon as a competitor for the prize advertised in this paper, and subject to the conditions printed on this page:

Name and address.....

THINGS TO REMEMBER.

1. Coupons may be sent either from "Pearson's Weekly" or "Short Stories."
2. All coupons must reach us not later than Friday, November 2nd, first post.
3. Competitors should cut out the whole coupon, score it as directed, put their name and address in the space provided, and send to "COUPON No. 4," Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, W.C.
4. All coupons are at senders' risk, and if they go astray, from whatever cause, we do not accept responsibility.
5. Competitors must attach their private address to their attempts. No prize will be sent to any post-office, refreshment rooms, or other places at which letters are called for. Attempts bearing such addresses will be disqualified.
6. In the event of a tie the prize will be divided.
7. It must be taken as a condition of the competition that anybody competing therein agrees to abide by the Editor's final decision.

Intending competitors in the above would do well to procure a copy of "The Football Who's Who," which contains valuable information and statistics showing the previous records of the various clubs, and the particulars of the points of about a thousand of the best known players. This book will be found of great service in determining the chances of the teams engaged. It only costs a shilling, and may be obtained of all booksellers, and post free for 1s. 3d. from the Publisher, 17 Henrietta Street, W.C.

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NEW SERIES.

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ACTOR.

III.—At the Nag's Head.

YES, we were in a pickle. The little fit-up company we had gone out with had "dried up," and we were left "stranded" in a small town on the north border of Lincolnshire. For weeks we had been dragging on somehow, listening to the promises of our unprincipled manager with all the gullibility of human nature, and looking upon his hopefulness with something more than admiration.

In the next town we were sure to make money; our luck was bound to turn; they must see the merits of our London comedy. So we parted with our jewels, watches, and musical instruments in different towns. The hall-keeper of the present town had legally or illegally put a restraining hand upon our baggage until he should have l is rent paid.

The company had diminished considerably. We were twelve originally but now we were seven, counting the manager. Latterly, nearly everyone doubled, and we prided ourselves that the audience did not discover the fact. Happy actors! Always ready to deceive themselves.

The manager had flown with the last receipts—a few pounds—the ladies had gone to London. We were too proud to write home and ask for money, at least we said so; Boddreys really was I believe, or afraid of being laughed at.

Halkett's family did not approve of his being on the stage; he was probably expectant of a rebuff and a lecture.

I, well, no doubt I should have got it if there happened to be any to spare there, but on that point I was doubtful.

"By Jove, I am hungry—and thirsty," said Halkett, who always was ready to eat.

Still, there was some excuse for him this time, as we had eaten nothing since breakfast, when we left our humble lodgings and our very handbags in them in lieu of payment.

"Well, there's a nice Jubilee fountain over the way, and heaps of turnips in the fields," suggested Boddreys.

Somehow we did not think he was a bit funny, though he tried to be.

We were standing in the market-place of the picturesque little town of Towton, gazing with hungry eyes at the shops. We were hungry; I doubt if we had ever been more so.

"I suppose there's nothing for it but the workhouse to-night," I said.

Their faces dropped.

"By Jove, is it as bad as that?" muttered Halkett.

"Will they take us in? We are rather decently dressed for casuals, are we not?" asked Boddreys.

"I think they would have to if we like to work."

"Work before supper, eh? Oh, then I am going for the turnips, honest I am. Come on, you chaps, it's not a bit of good standing here."

We had seen the turnips the day before when out for a walk, and laughed about them, but we little thought our hopeful manager would bolt with our next day's dinner and our jests become realities.

"Have we really nothing else to pawn?" asked Boddreys.

"Well, there are these handcuffs and this revolver put in my pocket by mistake last night after the last act, instead of, as I usually do, handing them to our late and worthy boss," I said. "But they wouldn't fetch anything, would they? Besides, there's no pawnshop in the town."

"Oh, happy town, or rather village!" said Halkett, mockingly spreading his hands towards Towton, in the approved dramatic gesture of bestowing a blessing.

"If I only had my mandoline, and you your banjo, we should soon pick up a few coppers in a pub," I said to Boddreys.

"We could try a song and a recitation or two without them, couldn't we?" suggested Boddreys.

We thought it over and felt we lacked courage without the banjo and the trifling sum with which to first pay our way into the place. For we wanted to do things in style and tickle the eyes of the company with our instruments first, and then accede to a request to tickle their ears.

"I have it," said Halkett, stopping us in the road, facing us and speaking hurriedly. "It's risky, but it can be done. The pub and the handcuffs put it into my head. We are two detectives, Brownson and I, and you, Boddreys, are the captured criminal, because you do look a bit of a scoundrel, you know, and you are dark. I was out here yesterday alone and went into a small inn about half-a-mile further on. A nice, simple-minded old man, just the very thing."

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"Yes, yes, but I don't understand," said Boddreys, "what good will that do?".

"Wait, and I'll explain, only come on quickly. Brownson give me the revolver. Good, I see it has a few blank cartridges yet unfired."

As Halkett unfolded his plan we became quite excited and pressed on quickly. It did seem feasible. Boddreys had qualms of conscience, but we explained to him hungry men could not deal in conscience, besides which we could make it all right afterwards.

Having rolled Boddreys in the road, battered in his hat and pulled him about a bit, he bore evidence of a struggle. The handcuffs completed the criminal to the life, plus a sulky and truculent expression. It was getting dark now, so thus prepared we entered the passage of the "Nag's Head" and asked to see the landlord privately.

Halkett was spokesman; he was a parson's son, and had plenty of cheek. The fat old innkeeper came out of the kitchen. The clatter of mugs and glasses, and the laughter of the yokels, made us determined, if we previously wavered, to share these luxuries with them.

"Mr. Laybourne, a word with you," said Halkett in a grandly precise manner. Then he spoke low and mysteriously. "I am detective Cooper, from Scotland Yard, and this my brother officer, Mr. Robinson. Oh, don't be alarmed, we are not on business here, we have only come to ask you for a little supper. We have just captured this dangerous criminal in the district and are now taking him to London."

"Well, sir," replied the landlord, now a little flurried, "I 'arldy like to 'ave a criminal in my 'ouse, it don't seem right, some'ow."

"Oh, perfectly safe, I assure you, any trouble you see and—" he produced the revolver by way of finishing the sentence.

This seemed to upset the landlord still more, and Halkett had to use all his tact to bring him round. He finally appealed to his humanity.

"Would you believe it, Mr. Laybourne, we have been so hard on the prisoner's track that we have had nothing since a hasty breakfast early this morning. Can you turn starving men from your door?"

"Well, sir, if you put it that way, what am I to say? But there is no fire in the parlour."

"Oh, never mind, we will go in the kitchen, I am sure no one will mind in there. Good evening, gentlemen," said Halkett, entering the room with all the assurance in the world, "and, Mr. Laybourne, let us have whatever you have got in the house as quickly as possible, for we shall have to be away soon."

One or two of the occupants of the kitchen muttered a good evening, but most of them were too astonished to speak, and continued to stare at us for a good quarter of an hour after, until they found their tongues.

I followed Halkett, having a firm hold of Boddreys by the collar. We took up our positions at a table between the fire and the door, Boddreys sullenly crouching at that end of the settle which was nearest the door.

We made short work of the cold meat, bread, cheese, and a gallon of beer the landlord placed in front of us; it was a godsend and no mistake.

Boddreys had to have his food cut up for him, on account of his pinioned hands; to do him justice, Boddreys ate like a savage, discarding all polite means of conveying his food to his mouth, and made noise enough for two pigs. The business went well, but we were terribly tempted to laugh, for it was so unlike the polite Boddreys.

Then we had a consultation as to whether the criminal should be allowed beer, and finally came to the conclusion that as he was not likely to ever see much more we would extend the favour. He drank a pint of it at a draught; this created a profound impression.

At length, one rubicund farmer bolder than the rest, being a man of means I suppose, broke the silence of the audience by saying:

"And who may you happen to be?"

"Do you refer to me, sir?" asked Halkett, "I am detective Cooper from Scotland Yard, and this is Mr. Robinson, my brother officer. We have just had the good fortune to capture that dangerous criminal in this district."

"Ah, I haven't seen him aboot," said the rubicund one.

"Possibly not, he was in hiding and disguised, but we found him out, and are now going to take him to London by the next train. Time-table please, Mr. Laybourne."

And Halkett with a sidelong and meaning glance at Boddreys put the revolver on the table with a bang and began to study the trains. The revolver created another impression, and set them all thinking again.

Old Rotundity was again the first to recover from the shock and said:

"I can't mak oot what he wanted up here. Wheer does he cum fra?"

"Why, surely you heard," said Halkett, stopping short.

"What, the chap as escaped?"

"Why of course."

"What, not Fosdike, the escaped murderer?"

"Who else?"

We knew nothing about Fosdike, we had not been able to afford a paper for weeks.

"Eh, but he's cum a lang way. And why be you fur takking him to Lunnon?"

"Those are my orders, sir, my orders, a man can but obey orders!"

"Aye, that's right enough, but for my part I should ha' took him back fra wheer he cum."

"And let him escape again," I suggested.

This raised a big laugh, and I think the farmer marked me for revenge, he was evidently an important person in the Nag's Head.

"He's like to be a dangerous sort," suggested a tall, raw-boned man.

Boddreys looked up from his plate and gave them all a scowl to verify the remark.

"Not th' sort o' chap as you'd like to meet alone on a dark night, Mr. Bawtree?" suggested another.

The remark was considered humorous.

The criminal objected to being laughed at, and lifted his plate with a growl as if to throw it, but quieted down as Halkett fingered the revolver.

"Now, gentlemen," said Halkett, "will someone sing us a song?"

"Eh, young Thompson here is a rare singer," said the raw-boned Bawtree, "ax him, he will. Cum, young Thompson."

"Yes, Mr. Thompson, now do oblige us," I requested.

"But I should like to hear one o' th' Lunnon gents sing first," said Thompson, with a perfectly regal condescension.

He was a young man with a very receding chin. He evidently knew his power as a vocalist, and did not deal much in modesty.

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"I've heerd say," put in old Rotundity, with intent, looking hard at me, "as Lunnon chaps can't sing fur nuts."

"It's not true, sir," said Halkett, before I could reply, "I will sing any man in this room for half-a-sovereign, and the company shall be the judge."

This was received with acclamation, and Rotundity offered to back Thompson against Halkett, half-a-sovereign a side. Halkett took the bet.

"Drinks round to the company, Mr. Laybourne," shouted Halkett. "Have you change for a sovereign?" he said, putting his hand in his pocket, then not giving the landlord time to reply, he went on, "but there, don't trouble, put it down on the bill and we will make one job of it, eh?"

Thompson commenced the contest with "The song that reached my heart," ladled out in gusts and barks, with an expression on his face as of ducks that die in storms. It was received amid the thunder of mugs and sticks upon the tables.

Then Halkett, who really had an excellent voice, gave us "The Diver." The applause was moderate and I heard a voice here and there say, "Not half bad," "He frames well." But the song was evidently too classic for them. As the contest was for three songs each side Thompson now barked "Kathleen Mavourneen," at times becoming drearily sentimental in the back of his throat. He chose too high a key and failed on one or two high notes, and although the song was a favourite his success was not so great as formerly.

Seeing the taste of our audience I told Halkett to sing "Rocked in the cradle of the deep," in which he scored well. The favour of the last two songs, "In old Madrid," from Thompson, and "The Vagabond" from Halkett was very equal.

Then came the vote and I sat in fear and trembling. I was greatly relieved when the result was equal. Many stuck to their local favourite, and it was surprising that Halkett had so many admirers who possessed the courage of their opinions.

The judgment of the singing was very humorous. One liked Thompson because his notes "kind o' hit him in the eye like." Another, because "he seemed to have three or fower voices all different;" one liked Halkett, because "he looked so grand and worked his hands so nice," another, because "he didn't seem 'fraid o' nowt."

The question was the casting vote. The landlord was appealed to, but he said:

"It's my place to please you all, gentlemen, and I can't afford to show no favour, nor make no enemies, nohow."

We suggested the prisoner, but that was objected to on the ground that a criminal has no taste.

Suddenly, Halkett espied a dart board against the wall.

"Look here, gentlemen, what do you all say if Mr. Thompson and I settle it with a throw or two of the darts, 151 up."

After some discussion this was agreed upon. Both competitors having declared they could neither of them play at all, they commenced with a few trial shots, and found themselves very equal, at least, so it seemed.

"Back me for all you're worth," said Halkett to me aside.

I knew Halkett enough to rely upon him. He evidently knew the game well so I promptly made a few small bets.

It was an exciting contest towards the end, for both men were equally matched, but finally Halkett made a lucky throw and won by a few points amid the cheers of his partisans. The money promptly changed hands and we felt elated with our success.

How delightful it was to feel rich again, we now possessed about a sovereign between us.

Thompson was very much annoyed, so also was old Rotundity, who clamoured for a renewal of the contest in a way that could not be refused.

"Noo be sportsmen if you Lunnon chaps can be, and I've heard you can't," said he, looking hard at me again. "Let him hev his revenge, Mr. Cooper. I double the stakes, an' if you're a man you'll take it."

They played again at double stakes and of course I had to renew my bets. But what was the matter with Halkett?

He began to play horribly; the anxiety of the whole night began to tell upon his nerves and his hand shook visibly.

I looked meaningly at Boddreys who was pretending to be asleep in the corner of the settle, with one eye half open.

We crowded round the players all intensely interested in the game which was nearing its close, and going badly for us.

At any moment Thompson might win, while Halkett had very little chance. Rotundity was radiant, and his vulgar sarcasm did anything but raise our spirits.

Thompson was preparing to throw the winning shot. I looked round, Boddreys was gone.

"Cooper, Cooper." I gasped with horror, as the arrow fled to its mark, "our prisoner has escaped," and then I stood there like one paralysed.

"What?" exclaimed Halkett with a shout.

Everyone forgot the game and turned to where Boddreys was supposed to be asleep. Their faces fell in blank dismay.

"My goodness, we are ruined!" exclaimed Halkett tragically. "Come, don't stand here like a pack of fools! After him, boys!"

We all rushed or tumbled out, Halkett firing two shots into the darkness and everyone shouting his best.

"A hundred pounds to anyone who catches him!" I shouted as we went. "Come he's gone this way across the fields to Towton."

We raced forward at our topmost speed and when we had out-distanced our beer-logged companions we doubled and made for the next station down the line where as had been arranged Boddreys waited for us.

Going into the station the last minute we took the first train north to the town where our musical instruments had been left in "Uncle's" care.

With the help of these we worked our way to London, doing so well that we were soon able to satisfy our qualms of conscience and settle our supper and betting accounts at the Nag's Head. DOUGLAS VIGORS.

Next Week: VIRTUE'S CHAMPION.

REMEMBER, REMEMBER,
the 1st of NOVEMBER
is the day when
PEARSON'S MAGAZINE
is published. The November number is superb. Keep a sixpence ready for it.

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CORPORAL CHRIS.

"CHRIS," said Tom's mother, "you'll look after him, won't you? He's all I have, you know; and he's so daring that I fear for him; Heaven alone knows how I fear for him!"

"Right you are, Mrs. Keene. I'll keep an eye on him. And don't you fret now, Tom will come home to you, a perfect hero, with medals, and glory, and a whole haversack of loot."

"I only want him to bring back himself. You're stronger minded, Chris, than my Tom, and if you'll only keep your word you'll have my prayers, and a mother's prayers are worth something, Chris."

Tom Keene and Chris Underhay were the David and Jonathan of Gwynne Street, Chelsea. Schoolmates, playmates, and later on always good chums, where one led the other was sure to follow; so it was not surprising that upon the breaking out of the war in South Africa, when Chris, in a fit of enthusiastic patriotism, enlisted, Tom should needs do the same.

Chris' position as one of a large family, made his action of no especial moment to his friends, he being the "ugly duckling" of the domestic brood, but Tom, the only son, the only child of his mother, a widow, ought to have thought twice before taking such a step.

It was a stirring time, as everyone will remember, this send-off of a great army to the Dark Continent, to vindicate British honour, and maintain the national credit, and in spite of mother-tears, and tremblingly whispered "farewells" from rosy lips, the two friends went joyously to the fray.

True, Tom every now and again felt sobered as his mother's face, anxious, sorrowful, rose up before him, but it was not in his nature to indulge in such thoughts for long. He lived in the light of other men's companionship.

Gregarious to a degree, he never cared to remain much with himself. He bored himself. He needed the noise, the glass-clink, and the laughter, to be found in the company of his kind.

It was this disposition which made his friendship with Chris the more remarkable. For Chris was by no means a roysterer, a mere empty chatterer and boon-comrade. Rather was he a reserved man, one who kept his opinions to himself, and one, too, upon whom you might surely rely at any time in stress or emergency.

Still Tom loved him, although often vexing him by his utter want of backbone and self-control, by a shilli-shalliness which more than once had landed him in undesirable situation.

One secret, and only one, had they between them, otherwise, there was perfect mutual trust and openness.

It is generally a love affair that occasions, in the case of men, at least, a certain amount of reserve as between intimates. In this particular instance there was, on the one side at any rate, good reason for it.

Kitty Laidlaw had much to answer for in the matter, as all such pretty mischievous coquettes ever have, or should have.

She loved Chris Underhay, there was little doubt about that, but when behind her sweetheart's back she though it good to carry on a desperate flirtation with Tom, the value of her affection, to any right thinking mind, was sensibly discounted.

The worst of it was that Kitty, up to the moment of the embarkation of the troops, succeeded only too well in persuading Tom that she really cared for him, giving him, at a final stolen interview in the gardens of the old College, her portrait, and a vague, though to him very real promise of reward on his return from the campaign.

Chris, too, had his "farewell" experiences, and, in his happy ignorance, they were very sweet.

Yet even his generally unsuspicious nature fancied an absence of something he could not altogether define. The rift in the lute always adversely influences its tunefulness, be the rift ever so small or so apparently unimportant.

So matters stood upon the day of departure, and although the big transport carried, in the persons of the two friends, two such diverse natures, yet it had on board no two finer examples of Britain's fighting sons.

* * * * * *

The day of Colenso, that terrible Friday, the effect of which was to cloud for awhile our prospects in South Africa.

It was at early dawn that the British made their attack in full force, and all through the day the struggle went on, to the murderous accompaniment of an unprecedented cannonade.

"Tom," Chris said that morning before daylight, (the regiment was luxuriating in a brief "stand-easy," for the advance of the Ladysmith relief column had been severe to the point of punishment.) "Tom! this isn't going to be child's play to-day; we shall need all our pluck, lad, I'm thinking, to carry us through."

"Why, Chris, old man, it isn't like you to be despondent. Take it from me, the Boer's aren't made yet that will lick us! Besides, you oughtn't to talk like that, you who got your stripes at Elandslaagte!"

"Ah! I don't care so much about that," said Chris musingly, "after all, I very much doubt if the game's worth the candle."

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"There's something wrong with you, that's certain," said Tom, seriously for him, "what is it, old chap?"

"Oh! nothing! and yet it is something, something I can't shake off, or make clear to myself," replied the other.

"Well, we shall be falling-in in a minute or two, but if you'd care to tell me, as near as you can get at it, what it is that's worrying you, it might ease your mind."

"Tom, I'm not, as you know, a believer in dreams, but I had one last night which shakes my scepticism a bit."

"A dream! you! I shouldn't think that a vision of the night would have much weight with you."

"Nor would it in ordinary case; but this dream, Tom, was so real, so—so convincing, that faith in its actuality and warning is somehow forced upon me."

"Well."

"I saw then in my dream that I, myself, was lying dead out on the veld yonder; and that you, riding a white horse, leapt across my prostrate body towards a white-robed female figure, that stood outlined in the moonlight against a belt of dark scrub, a hundred yards or so away. That's all!"

"Is that all!" cried Tom; but as he uttered the words his heart sank within him.

An indefinite sense of coming peril to one or other, or both of them, smote his soul. For the life of him he could not look Chris squarely in the face. Even the dull red glow of the hastily lit fire of a few sticks, would have revealed his agitation.

Then Chris spoke again.

"Perhaps, after all, it may only be the outcome of a morbid brooding. Well, there! I'll try and throw it off, Tom, old boy! Let us hope that Richard will be himself again by this time to-morrow!"

"Heaven grant it!" said Tom, fervently, grasping convulsively almost his friend's hand.

The word was now given to march, and in a few moments the relief force was in rapid motion again.

When, an hour later, the faint signs of approaching dawn were visible, the water of the Tugela lap'd a welcome to man and beast.

It was Friday evening. The Boers swimming, some of them, the river in their shirts, swarmed to the pursuit. They seemed infected with the spirit of vengeful malice, threatening even the bearers of the dead and wounded, and in more than one instance, deliberately shooting down the doers of the charitable office.

The enemy's fiercest fire had come from a Hotchkiss Automatic Gun, planted upon Hlangwane Hill. The execution done in the British ranks by this means had been fearful; but in the rush to reap the reward for victory, the gun on the hill was left practically undefended.

Half-a-dozen Boers at the most kept by it, and even these few seemed to be more interested in watching the action of their comrades than in the safe keeping of their formidable charge.

The regiment in which served Chris and his friend was the last to leave the field. It had borne the brunt of the last deadly Boer onslaught, but at the expense of many lives.

Save for a spent bullet tap on his left forearm, Tom was unhurt, while Chris had never a scratch.

It was during the retreat, that Tom, casting back a glance at the scene, saw the comparatively unprotected state of the big gun on Hlangwane Hill.

Without a second thought or without even a word to Chris by whose side he had kept throughout the day, he whispered to three or four men nearest to him, hurriedly sketching his scheme.

Suddenly the little party broke away from the main body, darting back to where stood an ammunition waggon, with its team still attached.

Unhitching the horses, and then each man springing into the driver's saddle, they made at breakneck speed for the hill.

Tom cannot to-day tell how he reached it, or what exactly happened.

All he does know for certain is that every one of his little band was shot out of the saddle before the hill was gained.

He remembers, too, his own hand-to-hand encounter with a gigantic Boer, whose clubbed Mauser brought him crashing to the ground.

Chris, usually so watchful of Tom's movements, had his hands full at this time, owing to the lack, through casualties, of non-commissioned officers; thus it was quite ten minutes before he missed his friend.

Then, intuitively almost, he guessed the truth, which a look behind him verified to the full.

He did not hesitate. Tom's mother seemed present, and urging him to a fulfilment of his promise.

Not staying to gather help, he turned and ran for dear life in the direction of what now was a little battle on the hill.

Tom saw him, just as his adversary's rifle was descending upon him for the second time.

But the Corporal was also seen by other eyes.

Two shots rang simultaneously out. As the big Boer threw up his arms, his mauser dropping heavily out of his hand, Chris staggering towards Tom a step or two, fell forward upon his face.

* * * * *

Tom, who remained a prisoner until the general release after Botha's resignment of the struggle, now lives with his mother in the old house at Chelsea.

Kitty Laidlaw is nurse in one of the great metropolitan hospitals. She says she will never marry.

Tom has returned to her the portrait of herself that she gave him in the "College" garden a year before.

The memory of him who lies buried in the far-away veld is very green in both their hearts; but it is mingled with, in large proportion, a feeling closely akin to conscious shame.

As for his regiment, there is no brighter record on its roll of honour than that associated with the name of Corporal Christopher Underhay.

RALPH ENDERBY.

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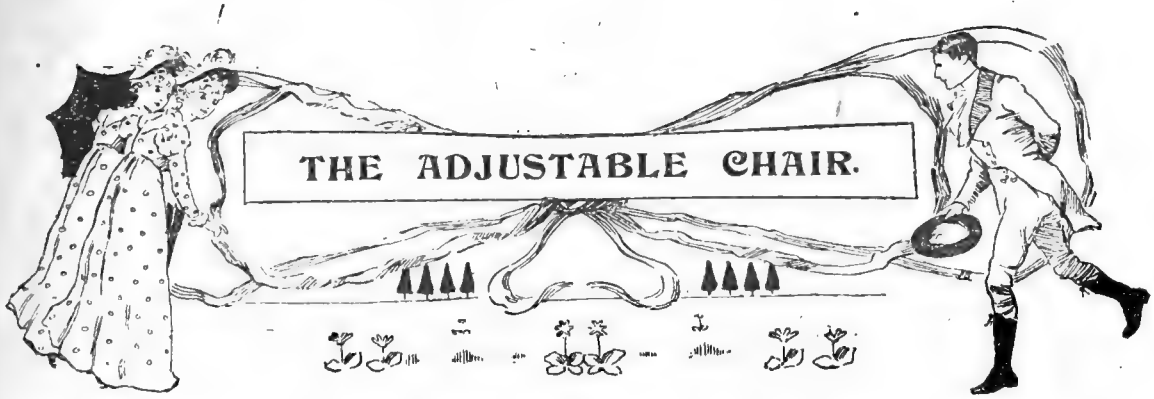

THERE are eccentric men in Tooting. The same is true of all parts of the country, but Tooting eccentricity develops itself in ways that are peculiarly ingenious and pleasing. Mr. James W. Beale furnishes a conspicuous and characteristic illustration of this great truth, and his name deserves to be remembered among those who can appreciate eccentricity of a truly original type.

Mr. Beale has a daughter. She is a good girl, weighing one hundred and thirty-three pounds. She is greatly respected by all who know her, and is undoubtedly a most estimable person, of whom her father might be honestly proud. It is, however, a part of Mr. Beale's eccentricity to assume that when a young man comes to spend the evening with a young lady, the two usually occupy only a single chair.

This theory, which is doubtless founded on the unsubstantial basis of the comic papers, is, of course, utterly untenable by any man of sound judgment, but the eccentric Mr. Beale firmly believes it. He cherishes, moreover, views of the strictest nature as to the way in which a young lady should conduct herself, and he has often informed Miss Beale that a community of chair is one of the most wicked of the ideas of modern Socialism, and that no young lady should permit any man to sit within ten feet of her chair. His daughter has invariably replied: "Yes, pa, I think you are quite right."

Although he thus failed to discover any evidence that his daughter had departed from his instructions, Mr. Beale was far from being convinced that all was right, and accordingly he designed his now celebrated patent adjustable chair, a mechanical invention intended to restrain young people from any tendency to overtax the strength of any one chair.

The patent adjustable chair does not present any novel peculiarities to the eye, but it is so constructed that when an excess of weight is placed upon it the seat sinks to the floor, and a whistle, worked by compressed air, gives forth a weird and piercing shriek. It can be adjusted so as to sink with almost any desired weight, and a judicious father can regulate it according to the weight of his daughter and of her various visitors.

For example, Miss Beale weighed one hundred and thirty-three pounds, and Mr. Barlow, the local chemist's assistant, weighed one hundred and fifty-five. If, therefore, Mr. Beale adjusted his patent chair so that it would sink under a weight of two hundred pounds, it is evident that the weight of the young lady or the young man alone could not cause the whistle to sound, but that their combined weight could not be placed on the chair without setting the peculiar machinery in action.

There was also a Mr. Carpenter, weighing two hundred and four pounds, who occasionally called on Miss Beale, and on nights when he was expected it would be necessary to fix the sinking point of the chair at three hundred pounds. The merit of the invention is obvious, and Mr. Beale felt, when he placed his patent adjustable chair in his back parlour one Sunday evening, just before Mr. Barlow's arrival, that he was now certain to learn whether his daughter was in the habit of implicitly following his counsels.

About nine o'clock the ingenious father, who was in the dining-room waiting earnestly for the whistle, heard the peculiar and unmistakable sound of that treacherous device, and instantly rushed into the back parlour. He found Mr. Barlow lying across the collapsed chair and Miss Beale standing at a respectful distance from him, anxiously inquiring if he was hurt. He said he had accidentally caught his foot in the hearthrug and had fallen over the chair.

This explanation could not be rejected, for it was quite possible that the chair might have been collapsed by just such an incident. The disappointed father withdrew, taking the chair with him, and admitting to himself that his daughter was not to be caught with any ordinary trap.

But in spite of this failure the adjustable chair has recently been brought prominently before the public. When the church committee met last month, and there was a scarcity of chairs, Mr. Beale sent the sexton to his house with instructions to bring all the chairs he could find.

The adjustable chair was among them, and Mr. Beale, forgetting its peculiarities, made haste to personally offer it to the chairman. The chair, as a subsequent examination proved, had been adjusted, and it so happened that the chairman weighed just three hundred and one pounds.

When, therefore, after having delivered an impressive speech, the reverend gentleman sat down, the assembly was horrified to see him sink rapidly to the floor, while the shriek of the whistle was supposed to be a cry of pain wrung from the unhappy man.

The subsequent trial and expulsion of Mr. Beale for sacrilegiously playing a dangerous practical joke on the chairman, with the design of bringing religion into contempt in the eyes of the world, has made the peculiarities of the chair familiar to almost everyone.

At the same time there can be no question that this chair is an excellent one from a father's point of view, and the time will come when every young man will eye the average chair with misgivings, and share with his sweetheart the convenient, if grimy, coal-scuttle.

W. E. SPEAR.

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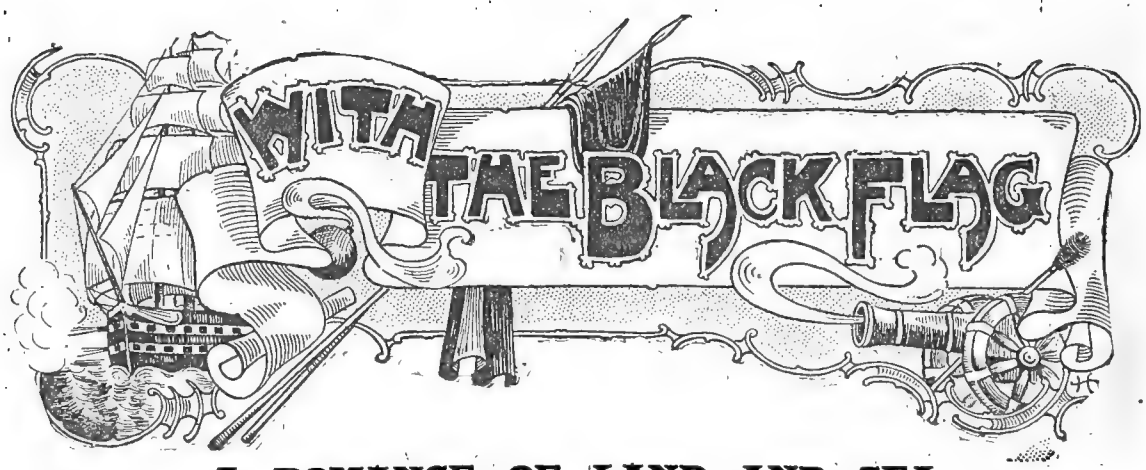

A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

By William Westall.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

Major Wyvenhoe, commander of an expedition which went out from England to help the Venezuelans in their struggle for liberty.

Captain Cautley, who is in charge of the ship which took the expedition out.

John Ready, the servant of Wyvenhoe.

General Arismendez, ex-Governor of Pampatar and Vice-President of the Venezuelan Republic.

Dons Iago Santleo, and Antonio Bonanza, two Venezuelans who are friends of Wyvenhoe.

General Urdenetta, Governor of Pampatar, a bitter enemy of Wyvenhoe.

Bolivar, Supreme Chief of the Venezuelan Republic.

Tamanac, an Indian Cazique, and great friend of Santleo.

CHAPTER XIX.

Arrival at Manoa.

"At to-morrow's dawn you will get your first view of Mount Manoa," observed Santleo as we dismounted from our mules before a rude Indian habitation where we were going to pass the night.

"We shall have to rise before the sun then. From this valley there is no prospect," I said.

"Two hours ere the sun, or we shall not gain the foot of the mountain before he sets. From hence thither is nearly a day's journey and my home sickness is greater than ever. We have been a weary while on the way. Did not the darkness of the night and the difficulties of the descent forbid, I would fain push on a few leagues further."

We had indeed been a weary while on the way. It was three months since we parted company with the patriots, and even yet we had not reached our destination. We had met with more delays and undergone more hardships than we anticipated; the "ordinary dangers of travel" had proved as great as the ordinary dangers of a campaign. For days together we had ridden over arid plains where no water was, and through snake infested swamps, and dark and dismal forests. We had been laid up with fever and forced to make long halts in wretched quarters. Once, while returning alone from an abortive shooting excursion I had been attacked by a pack of savage dogs and narrowly escaped with my life. Not common prairie dogs, but descendants of the ferocious hounds of Cumana, used by the Spaniards for hunting fugitive slaves, which, having been let loose owing to the war, had betaken themselves to the llanos, and reverting to their original wildness became more dangerous than jaguars or pumas. The pack chased me, full cry, for several miles and had not Santleo and the others heard their baying and come to my help there had been a kill and I should have been in at the death. It was the first time I had ridden from hounds, and I found it vastly more exciting than riding to them.

Before long the weather broke, beginning with terrible thunder storms, preceded and accompanied by lightning so vivid and continuous that for hours together the whole firmament was in a blaze of white fire. Then the windows of heaven opened and the rain descended for many days, making the rivers overflow their banks and converting the llanos into vast lagoons, out of which, here and there, rose a hamlet or a hato (cattle farm) which, being built on an eminence, escaped the deluge.

To one of these we betook ourselves, and there for a long time tarried, under compulsion, since going on before the floods abated had been to court destruction.

So soon as it was possible and before it was prudent we went on. The earth was so soft that our horses sank up to their fetlocks at every step, which so tired them that we could make only short marches, and camping out on the saturated ground was neither comfortable nor safe. We all suffered more or less from fever. When the sun came out a great smoke rose up from the plain, so that we were in a continual vapour bath. Our clothes were never dry. But crossing the swollen rivers was our greatest difficulty and our greatest danger. They were too wide to be passed by swimming, and we had baggage. When boats could not be obtained, we had to make rafts of bulls' hides, to which the animals were roped; hazardous undertakings that several times brought us into great peril. Two of the horses were drowned, and one of the llaneros, whom we had engaged as helpers and guides, was so mauled by a cayman that he died.

But everything comes to an end, so did the llanos, and when we came to the hills we had to make different arrangements. The horses were changed for mules, the llaneros dismissed and replaced by Indian mountaineers.

From this point the journey, though less monotonous, was quite as trying and progress even slower. We crossed ravines and rivers by rope suspension bridges under which we were slung, getting over partly by our own impetus, partly with the help of drag ropes; crawled along the face of precipices by tracks not more than two feet wide, and tra-

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versed rocky passages so narrow that we had to dismount and go afoot, there being no room for our legs.

Of ordinary ascents and descents we thought nothing, albeit many of them were desperate scrambles; and the days were intolerably hot and nights often as intolerably cold. But we had the advantages of superb scenery and bracing air, and one still greater, relief from the onslaughts of ticks, jiggers and mosquitoes.

After many days this part of our journey drew also to a close. On the morrow I was to see Manoa and, as I hoped, learn Santleo's secret. During the journey he had told me no more than I have set down, and seeing that he desired to avoid the subject I made no further attempt to draw him.

At four o'clock we were once more on the move, leading our mules; for the trail out of the quebrada was steep and stony and ran between sheer rocks and a raging torrent.

At first we were in inky darkness, but as the gorge opened out and we reached higher ground our old friend Lucifer favoured us with his friendly light, which was a great help.

Santleo was silent and seemingly absorbed in thought, and being myself in no mood for talk, also somewhat anxious, for it was just possible that his people might give me the cold shoulder, I asked him no questions.

When we had gained a ridge, which so far as I could make out, was the summit of the pass, he called a halt, speaking for the first time since we left the Indian hut.

"We shall wait here until the sun rises, unless you are cold and would rather go on," he said.

"Not at all, I am warm with expectation," quoth I, making an effort to keep my teeth from chattering, the cold just then being intense.

We were once more on the move, leading our mules.

"It won't be long, only a few minutes. See, the stars are beginning to pale already," added Don Iago.

I looked east. The sky was suffused with a crimson glow which gradually broadened and soon the red disc of the sun rose above a chain of serried peaks which bounded the horizon.

"Manoa is not out there," said Santleo.

I looked westward, and saw what seemed to be a great, white wall reaching from the earth to the sky. As the sun rose higher I perceived that the wall was a chain of mighty snow mountains, the first I had seen, and the most stupendous sight I had yet beheld.

"Manoa is not out there," repeated Santleo. "Look down."

I looked down and saw a vast and verdant plain stretching further than the eye could reach. In the middle of this plain rose a mountain of great extent with sides absolutely sheer, as perpendicular as the walls of a house, and as Santleo told me nearly two thousand feet high. Hence it was as broad at the summit as at the base, peak there were none, and in the distance looked as flat as the plain from which the mountain sprung. How far it extended westward I could not make out, nearly as far, it seemed to me, as the white mountains.

"And that is Manoa?" I exclaimed.

"That is Manoa," answered Santleo.

"And where do your people live, on the plain, I suppose?"

"On the mountain, of course."

"But How the dickens do they get there? Have they wings?"

"Not yet. Those are to come," quoth Santleo with a laugh. "You will know all about it in a few hours."

"Well, if it is not wings it must be balloons. Scaling that mountain is no more possible than swimming up the falls of Niagara."

Then we began the descent which was so abrupt that the mules were often on their haunches, occasionally on their beam ends, mine taking up so much of my attention, that, until we reached the bottom I had none to bestow on Manoa, though it was continually in my mind. But when I had leisure to look about me I scrutinised it more closely, and the more I looked the more my wonder grew.

Regarded from the plain it was far more imposing both in bulk and height than it had seemed from the ridge. It was the difference between looking up and looking down.

Yet we were still twenty miles away, a distance at which you can distinguish only the general contour of the mountain, and there might be some way of getting to the top obvious only on closer inspection.

We rode on, and the mules, pleased with the change from stony tracks to a fair road, took to pacing without being pressed, and we went over the ground at good speed. The plain was fertile and well cultivated, the climate, as I judged from the products of the soil, sub-tropical. The peons (peasants) were all Indians, and lived in little houses built of wood and mud, which, when hard-dried by the sun, becomes as hard as bricks.

The Indians whom we met greeted Tamanac with great deference, some rendered Santleo similar honour, though they appeared to have a difficulty in recognising him, from which I inferred that he had altered considerably during his absence.

But I had eyes for little else than Manoa, and presently perceived something so passing strange that I thought I was bewitched. The mountain appeared to have no base; it rested on nothing. The lower half—but that was the point, or rather, the illusion or my delusion—so far as I could see there was no lower half.

I shut and opened my eyes repeatedly, turned my head

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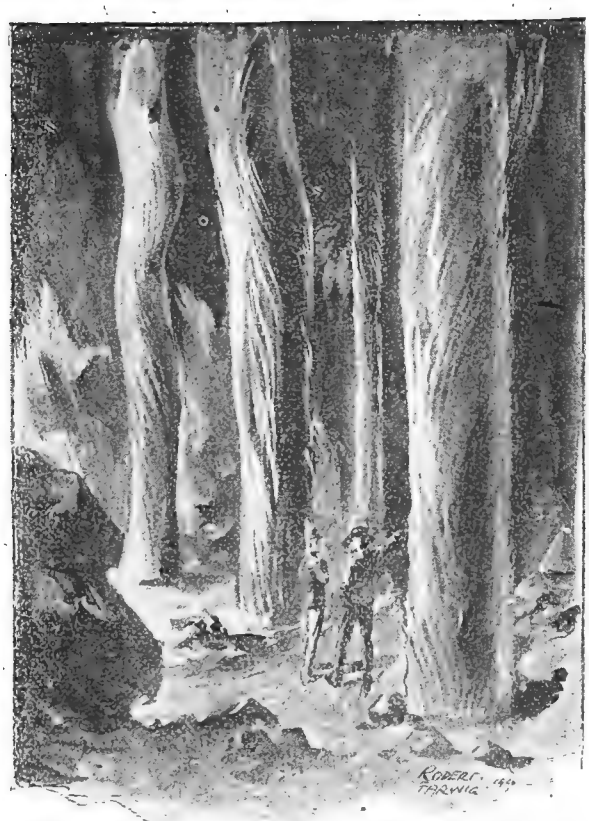

The number of columns was bewildering; no two were alike.

and looked again and again. It was always the same. Manoa still hung between heaven and earth. But the thing was so impossible, the idea so preposterous that I could not bring myself to ask Santleo whether I saw right.

Finally, however, I put the question, though diffidently and in expectation of a laughing reply.

"Either my eyes deceive me, or there is something peculiar about that mountain," I said. "On what is it supported?"

"On pillars. But as yet they don't show. It looks as though there were nothing."

"Pillars! But how can pillars support a weight so immense? And how did they get there?"

"The Indians say that the work was done by the genii of the Andes, with the devil for architect. That is the Cazique's opinion, and he shakes his head dubiously when I tell him that Nature is a greater wonder worker than Satan. When you have had a closer view you must give me your opinion."

Soon I had a closer view, and I saw that my eyes had deceived me, though not a great deal.

Owing to a slight diaphanous mist that hovered over the plain, or to some peculiar effect of light and shade, the void had appeared greater than it really was. Yet none the less did the body of the mountain seem to be without support, and it was only when we drew nearer that I descried the pillars of which Santleo had spoken. These were white and round, measuring, from base to summit, two to three hundred feet; and through a vast archway of the same material flowed a broad river, which meandered eastward across the plain.

I was so lost in wonder at these marvels that until Santleo roused me by an abrupt exclamation I had not noticed a party of horsemen who were coming towards us.

"Some of your people?" I asked.

"Yes! Yes!" he exclaimed excitedly, spurring his mule, but, as the creature was doing its best already, without increasing its speed.

Soon we met them, a party of four young men of about the same age as Santleo, one as light complexioned, two darker, with flashing, black eyes; the fourth seemed to have a touch of Indian in his composition. But all were fine, good-looking fellows, and all spoke English. Their greetings were warm and rather effusive, yet there was none of that effeminate embracing and kissing to which Venezuelan creoles are so much given.

Then Santleo introduced me to his friends, whose names —Preston, Porter, Hewes, and Wells—sounded so familiar and home-like as to make me feel that despite my strange surroundings I was amongst friends.

"As we are about it I may as well tell you my name," said he.

"It is not Santleo, then?"

"That is the Hispaniolised version. I was christened James Santley."

"And you prefer the English version?"

"Here, certainly."

"Good! Now for another little rectification. You introduced me as Colonel Wyvenhoe. I am no longer in the Venezuelan service, and if you will henceforth call me Captain Wyvenhoe I shall be greatly obliged."

"I understand. You set more store by your captain's rank in the army of King George than your colonel's rank in the army of Don Simon, and you are quite right. So remember, brothers, our guest is Captain, not Colonel, Wyvenhoe."

After conferring with his friends, Santley told me that until they obtained permission from the authorities they would be unable to take me up the mountain.

"But Wells and I are going thither immediately," he added, "and during our absence the others will keep you company. I don't suppose we shall be away more than three or four hours, and there is a rest house where you can eat, and drink, and take your ease."

"You are very kind and I am greatly obliged to these gentlemen for bearing me company," quoth I. "Would you add to the obligation by letting me see you go up!"

On which they laughed, and answered, "Surely, why not?" And with that we went on once more, for while we talked we had pulled up.

So far I had seen only one side of the mountain, the shape of which was oblong, and a part of the front, as in my mind, I termed its south end, from which issued the stream. This we crossed by a bridge of canoes and after going two miles further came to a place where, at some time long past, a great piece had fallen from the mountain top leaving a huge gap above and forming a considerable mound below.

From the edge of the gap a flight of steps led up to the summit, while on the rocks was built a substantial platform to which access was gained by another flight of steps. These two points were connected by a series of rope ladders every length of which was secured to a bar of iron-wood, driven into a crevice of the rock, or a hole drilled for the purpose.

But none faint of heart, short of wind, or weak of limb, might attempt to climb that giddy staircase, and I almost trembled when the two men went lightly up the ladders, their apparent size diminishing until they looked like flies creeping up a wall, and in a short time became almost invisible to the naked eye.

Then a flag was waved from the gap at the top to inform us of their safe arrival, and we who were left behind descended from the mound and betook ourselves to the rest house, which stood hard by. Quite a large place it was, with several rooms, and a large garden, and servants who brought us meat, maize cakes and fruit, and palm wine of the finest vintage of Manoa, to all of which we did justice.

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I took care not to ask my entertainers no questions which I thought they might not like to answer, but when we had done eating I proposed a walk under the mountain, to which they readily assented, and in a few minutes we were there, entering the mighty cave between two gigantic pillars with bases so perfectly shaped that it was hard to believe that they were not the work of human hands. The number of columns was bewildering; no two were alike, some were round, some oval, some twisted, some straight, some so large that it took several minutes to walk round them, others comparatively slender, all white and smooth. The upper parts were shrouded in perpetual darkness, and the sun being over our heads the light below was ghostly and dim. The grandeur and gloom and awesomeness of the place were intensified by the din and roar of the unseen river and once there came a mighty crash like a thunder clap, which echoed and reverberated for several minutes in a way that made my flesh creep.

"A stone falling from the top," said Hewes. "They are always falling, and the man who is hit is seen no more. He is killed and buried at the same time. I think we had better be going out."

I thought so too. It was not a desirable place for an afternoon ramble.

Hewes told me that the river came out of the ground some way west of Manoa, and it was supposed to have its source in a large lake at the foot of Mount Lofty, the great white peak in the far distance. In winter, when it rained on the plains and snowed on the Andes, the river often rose to an immense height, thundering under the mountain and foaming and swirling among the columns as though it were possessed of legions of devils. Which I could well believe.

We now took a walk in another direction and then returned to the rest house where presently came Santley and Wells, accompanied by a fine looking old gentleman with a white moustache and beard, the latter pointed, a nondescript complexion and skin something between light red and reddish brown, a long face, an aquiline nose, high cheek-bones and kindly grey eyes.

"Master Walter Wyvenhoe, our honoured judge," said Santley, and then withdrew, followed by the others.

"Did I hear aright? Is your name indeed Wyvenhoe?" I cried, so soon as I could speak. "Or was Santley joking?" I was going to add, but as the old gentleman looked far too dignified to be jocular I refrained.

"My name is indeed Wyvenhoe, good sir. I am a descendant of the Walter Wyvenhoe who sailed from Bristol in the ship *Bold Venture*——"

"In which also sailed his cousin and my forefather Gilbert Wyvenhoe," I, now greatly excited, struck in. "But by what strange chances or series of events has it come to pass——"

"That shall in due time be imparted to you," interrupted the judge. "My errand now is to say on what condition the council and people of Manoa will receive you as a welcome and highly honoured guest——"

"Any condition you may like to impose?"

"Nay, listen ere you decide. It is but one condition, the taking of an oath thus conceived. 'So long as I live and Manoa exists I will impart neither to man, woman nor child aught whatsoever I know of Manoa and its people, or may hereafter learn.'"

"I accept the condition," said I, though with a sense of disappointment, for it would compel me to keep secret what I thought was likely to prove the most interesting part of my travels and adventures.

"And your servant?"

"John Ready will also accept the condition."

"Then all we have to do is to call him in, also James Santley and the others, for the oath should be taken before witnesses. All this may seem strange and ungracious, Master Wyvenhoe, yet in truth it is not so, as ere long you shall know. But explanation must wait on opportunity. The day is far spent, and I fear you would find mounting the ladders after dark rather trying."

"And you, sir!"

"For one who has been used to that way of going home from his youth upwards, night has no terrors, but it hath its dangers, and in good sooth I would rather go up by daylight."

So Santley and the others were summoned, and in their presence Ready and I took the oath.

"Is there any way of getting our kits up?" I asked my compadre, as we made for the mound.

"Some of the peons will bring them."

"How? On their backs?"

"No, on their heads."

There was some question as to who should start first. It was the judge's right, but he waived it.

"You young men begin," said he, "you will go faster with us behind you than before. I shall follow with my good cousin, Captain Wyvenhoe, if he will let me so call him."

"I shall esteem it an honour to be so called, dear sir, and though as cousins we are many times removed, as friends I hope we shall be near," I returned.

"And near friends are good friends," added the old gentleman with a pleased smile.

Meanwhile the others were beginning the ascent, as to which certain rules were observed; no more than two were allowed to be on the same ladder at the same time, nor near together, and the second man was not to keep step with the first.

"Master Walter Wyvenhoe, our honoured judge," said Santley.

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John Ready did not like it at all.

"I would rather risk my life in a brush with the Spaniards or the French," he said. "Even if you get hit, the odds are against your being killed, but a fall from one of those ladders would be sudden death and no mistake."

"You won't fall, John, you will be too frightened. I know I shall," said I, as I prepared to follow my leader. "All you have to do is to step steadily and hold tight."

The mounting proved less formidable than I had anticipated, and after the first feeling of nervousness had passed away, I could look down, and even backward, without a tremor. The ladders were taut and strong. The staves, made of bulls' hide, light and tough, and the nearness of the mountain gave a sense of security which, however, was more apparent than real, since the rocks being for the most part smooth and sheer, there was nothing to lay hold of.

On the other hand, it was trying work for the wind, as well as for legs and arms, and I was glad when the judge called out:

"Here we will rest awhile."

Looking up, I saw him step from the ladder into a crevice, where Ready and I presently joined him. It was large enough to hold half-a-dozen; furnished with seats and shaded with bushes, and made a pleasant half-way house.

The prospect was grand. All round, so far as the eye could reach, were mountains piled on mountains. Manoa was the centre of a vast amphitheatre, a fortress whose furthest ramparts pierced the clouds, and where a handful of resolute men might hold their own against countless foes.

"Welcome to Manoa, kinsman," answered the girl.

The plain, as I now saw, was by no means level—few plains are—it rose gradually, as well towards the north as towards the west, and sloped to the east and south, a peculiarity to which I was one day to owe my escape from death.

"Is this the only way of getting to the top, Master Wyvenhoe?" I asked the judge.

"There is another thitherward"—pointing to the west—"practicable both for man and beast. But long ago it was blocked by a landslip, so that until it could be made good, a work of many years, there was no means of getting up or down. It was then that, driven by necessity, our fathers first made these rope ladders. But the journey that way is far more toilsome and five times as long, and we are used to the ropes."

"From which I conclude that the town is at this end of the mountain."

"The principal township and village are. We have no town. Shall we go?"

"If it please, you, Master Wyvenhoe."

On which we resumed our climb, the judge treading as nimbly and lightly as ever, Ready and I plodding wearily with heavy feet. I could hear John growl and groan, and mutter:

"Next time I'll go by that old road."

But as I have had occasion to observe before, everything comes to an end, and eventually we reached *terra firma*.

Santley and the others were waiting for us. There were also three mules.

"I thought you might be tired, so I ordered mules," said he.

"Which was very thoughtful of you. I am tired, and Ready can hardly get one foot before the other.

"Coming up the ladders is rather tiring at first, but you soon get used to it. How far have we still to go?"

"Not more than a mile when we are out of the hollow."

The hollow had been made by the great fall of rock which formed the mound. The sides were steep and covered with bushes and trees, through which a winding track led upwards.

My legs and arms were so stiff and sore that I had a difficulty in mounting my mule, but when we gained the summit I forgot my aches and was amply rewarded for my pains.

In grandeur and beauty the view surpassed the view from the resting-place as much as that surpassed the view from the plain, and the whole range of Andean peaks, for once uncapped by a single cloud, was bathed in the red glow of the setting sun.

The mountain-top was an undulating plateau, a great part of it under cultivation, interspersed with fine shrubs and noble trees, and had the appearance of a vast and lordly park.

The village lay something more than a mile away, a collection of white, single-storied houses, half-hidden among trees and surrounded by gardens.

Most of the villagers seemed to be out of doors.

"They are making ready to welcome you," said the judge, "and those in the road are coming to meet you."

"Those" were a number of young men and maidens, as might seem, in gala attire; the girls in flowing, white drapery and straw hats, adorned with bright flowers.

One of them came on faster than the others, a tall girl with rather square shoulders and as upright as a young palm tree, her well-poised head slightly backward, carrying herself like a queen, and walking with the light elastic tread, which denotes health and high spirits.

"Come hither, child," said the judge reining in his mule. "Come hither, child, and give thy kinsman welcome. Here is Captain Wyvenhoe from England, and this, Captain Wyvenhoe, is my daughter, Rosalind."

(To be continued.)

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT HAUNTED HOUSES.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "The Optimist," by Herbert Morrah, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. R. Jenkins, of Little Boys' Press, South Darenth, Kent. Attempts this week must deal with Stories about TELEGRAMS, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, November 5th. Post-cards only, please.

Ghosts?

A WALK of seven miles at midnight in a torrent of rain is not very inviting, but as I had missed my last train home this was necessary if I wished to reach my destination before daylight.

I started on my way, but had not got very far before I came to an empty house, set on a lonely common, which had the reputation of being haunted.

Feeling very brave, I determined to spend the night in this house, so as to save the long walk in the rain. Accordingly I climbed in through a window and prepared myself for the worst.

I had been there some time when I heard a noise outside in the passage and a loud bang at the door. My bravery suddenly departed. I trembled and went hot and cold by turns.

The noise continued, and after a time I found courage enough to go to the door armed with my umbrella. As I opened the door I heard a patter of feet. Cold perspiration was running down my back. What could it be? I stepped into the passage trembling in every limb, only to see half-a-dozen rabbits scampering down the stairs.

R. J.

Not a Ghost at all.

AN old Irishwoman who lives alone in a two-roomed cottage, went to the priest recently in a very perturbed state of mind.

"Sure me house is haunted, fadher!" she declared.

"Haunted? By what?" asked the priest.

"By a sperrit wid a wooden leg on him," answered the old woman. "Ivery noight for the lasht two wakes, whin Oi've bin in bed, Oi've heered him come shtumpin' along the road. He shtops at me dure, lifts the latch, shuts the dure behoind him, an' crosses the front room into the back wan. In the mornin' the dure is as Oi locked it the noight before. Oi want you to dhrive him off wid the howly wather, fadher."

"Very well," said the priest indulgently, for he knew the old woman was in her dotage.

That night as he sat in her house, he as well as she heard a wooden-legged person come along the road, open the door, and cross the outer room to the inner one, where the father and old lady sat. A big man with a wooden leg stood before them.

"Patsy!" shrieked the old woman. "Me bhoy! Where have yez been this fifteen year?"

"Soldierin', mother!" replied the ghost, clasping the old woman to him, "Oi lost me lig at Colenso."

W. J. O.

What a Relief.

JIMKINS had a habit of keeping late hours, and although his better-half made it uncomfortable for him at times, she failed to cure him of his nocturnal home-comings.

At last she hit upon a plan to frighten him, and so when he staggered in one night at his usual hour, he saw a white shrouded figure gliding towards him along the passage in the moonlight.

"Wh—wh—w—w—what's that?" gasped Jimkins.

"I am the family ghost," a sepulchral voice replied.

Jimkins heaved a sigh of relief.

"Great Scott!" he said; "how you frightened me! I thought 'twas the missus."

Then the storm broke.

H. E. L.

The Shade of Trouble.

AT a Christmas gathering in a country house we were all sorry that Mr. Gill, a popular young curate, could not join us for a few days. His *fiancée*, Lily Sweet, was especially disappointed.

However, at the last moment he wired to say he could come, after all; and as another guest had been given his room, there was no choice but to put him in the haunted room—the only one available.

He arrived at five o'clock, and during the evening was the life of the party, and laughed at Lily's fears respecting the uncanny nature of his apartment.

Next morning he did not appear at the breakfast-table, and we went to his room; but, finding the door locked, we finally broke it open—to find the room empty and looking as though no one had slept there.

Naturally, we were much mystified and alarmed at this strange occurrence, especially when nothing of his whereabouts could be ascertained; and great was our horror when news came a few hours later from his home saying that the poor young fellow had been found dead in his bed on the previous morning!

We then realised that our guest of the night before had been none other than our friend's spirit.

CISSIE.

A False Alarm.

I AM a traveller, and one winter evening I put up for the night at an old inn at Leek, in Staffordshire. I sat by the fire, and, in order to keep out the cold, I am afraid I drank a good deal of my landlady's old ale. However, I fell asleep.

When I awoke, the room was pitch dark. The wind howled outside. I rose shivering, and looked out of the

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window. Great Kruger! what a sight met my eyes. There, dancing about, first assuming one shape and then another, was a perfect army of spectres representing different parts of the human body.

Here was a long, white, headless body frantically waving its long, skinny arms; there a pair of legs, minus the feet, dancing as if crazed. Farther on was a smaller body like that of a child. The air seemed full of them. Presently there came a wild gust of wind. One of the bodies seemed to detach itself from the rest and fly straight at the window. I gave a fearful shriek. The landlady rushed in.

"Look, look!" I gasped, pointing to the window.

She looked, then turned to me with a pitying smile.

"Well," she said, "what's the matter? That's only the washing out to dry."

J. C.

Only a Cat.

A WEEK or two ago there was a ghost scare in a small village in the North of England. Strange noises had been heard for two or three days and nights in an old disused cottage.

One night the villagers determined to hunt the ghost down. They nearly all turned out. Some had pitchforks, others spades, hammers, knives, or anything they could use as a weapon. But when they reached the cottage and heard the rattling inside, none of them dare enter until the village constable came on the scene.

He burst the doors open, and ran the ghost into a corner of the cottage, when he found that it was not a ghost, but a cat. It had got its head fast in an old salmon tin, and in trying to extricate itself had dragged the can over the stone floor, making the strange noises that had frightened all the village.

The cottage is now always known as the "Haunted House."

W. J. B.

No Longer a Sceptic.

UP to a few years ago I was a disbeliever in the so-called ghost story, and put no faith in the tales. I often heard of meetings with shadowy forms, death warnings, second-sight visions, and such like. That there is something in these, however, I must now admit, reluctantly, perhaps, yet having had a personal experience, I can no longer claim to belong to the ranks of the sceptical.

What I am now about to relate is no mere creation of my brain, but actual fact.

I ought to say that my wife, with whom this story is more immediately connected, has all her life been more or less superstitious.

In the summer of 1889 I was spending a short holiday at Anstruther, Easter, in Fifeshire. I was accompanied by my wife and two children, and we had a comfortable room rented from an elderly couple, who appeared to have been at one time in better circumstances. They had a little granddaughter staying with them, a girl of fourteen or so.

One night towards the end of our holiday we retired to rest about eleven o'clock, and I very soon fell asleep. I was awakened by my wife some two hours afterwards asking me to get up and strike a light, as she fancied someone was in the room. I lay for a moment and listened, and hearing the little granddaughter cough in the adjoining room, the door of which was slightly open, I called out:

"Are you sleeping, Jeannie?"

"No," she replied, "but I wish you would light the lamp, as I think there is something in my room."

I sprang out of my bed at once and put my hand on the box of matches on the mantel-shelf.

As I did so a man brushed past me in the direction of the window. His face was towards me, and I recognised the features of my wife's father. My wife must also have seen him, for she called out:

"Oh, that's my father."

The sweat broke out on my forehead and ran in streams down my face. I replied:

"It's nothing; you've been dreaming, dear," but she was not to be put off, and there was no more sleep for either of us that night.

Next morning we had the following telegram from my wife's sister:

"Father died last night about twelve."

E. C. C.

"Robert" as a Ghost.

I SLEPT in a room over a shop, and was the sole occupant of the premises during the night. I had sunk, as was my wont, into a deep, refreshing sleep. Suddenly I awoke, to find that my hair was going up, and my courage going down.

For a moment, I was spell-bound with fear, for a strange, unearthly light pervaded the room, proceeding, as I quickly perceived, from a ball of blinding light, about the size of a cricket-ball, suspended in mid-air at the further end of the room.

I sprang up, quivering with horror, gazing at the eerie, staring eye of light. It moved—it was coming nearer! My blood ran cold, and I was gasping for breath, when a hoarse voice grunted out:

"It's all right, guv'nor; only you've forgotten to lock the shop-door!"

It was the policeman with his bull's-eye lantern! I believe I put my arms round his neck and embraced him when I discovered it wasn't a ghost after all.

A. H.

A Startling Visitor.

THERE is a castle in Gloucestershire where a strange thing happened some years ago, and in broad daylight, too, which makes it the more interesting.

Two ladies were sitting in the morning room after breakfast, one on each side of the window, facing each other. They were engaged on their embroidery, and not talking or thinking of ghosts.

All at once the lady of the house saw a strange sight, which startled her beyond measure. Being possessed of great self-control, she restrained herself and glanced at her companion. This lady was pale as death, and evidently greatly alarmed.

"What is the matter?" asked the hostess.

"What! Did you not see the head and shoulders of that black man come up through the floor?" came the reply.

This was exactly what the hostess had seen.

Subsequent investigation revealed the existence of a walled-up cellar below, in which was a skeleton evincing all the peculiarities of the negro type.

J. B. C.

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CHEE-WING-SU, MANDARIN.

BEGINNING at Shangtung, in the Yellow Sea, the coast line of China is dotted with Islands clear down to Hongkong, a distance of over 2,000 miles.

If the islands were counted I believe they would number 10,000, great and small. While some are uninhabited there is not an honest community on one of them. The people are wreckers and pirates to a man, and woe betide the ship which meets with disasters on any of the island shores.

From Yang-tse-Kiang to the entrance of the Straits of Formosa the islands are under the jurisdiction of a mandarin at the above port.

In the year 1868 this mandarin was one Chee-Wing-Su, who had held office for years, and his reputation was that of a devil. There was no question but that he encouraged piracy and got his share in the spoils and his orders all along the coast line were to kill every white person who might fall into the hands of his subjects.

The fellow was subordinate to the Government at Shanghai, but whenever he was brought up on the complaint of a European consul he managed to get the best of it.

He was fairly well educated, a finished liar and hypocrite, and there was no catching him.

In the year I have mentioned above certain Englishmen in Hongkong decided to fit out an opium clipper to supply the port of Shanghai.

Opium smuggling was against the law, of course, and any person found engaged in the trade was beheaded at once, but you might as well try to keep rice as opium out of China.

The profits in smuggling have always been enormous, and it has always been part of the business to bribe the custom officials. As Shanghai was to be supplied from Yang-tse-Kiang I was sent up to arrange matters with Chee-Wing-Su.

There was no beating about the bush. I told him what we wanted, and he lost no time in giving me his figures.

For so much per cent. he would guarantee us safety. He was smooth and suave, but under the polish I saw the hypocrite and tiger.

I accepted his terms for the company, but I also warned them that he would not hesitate to play any sort of game for his own benefit. He gave us a flag to protect us from piratical junks, but we did not trust to it.

The clipper was fitted out with four guns and well provided with small arms, and the crew of eighteen was made up entirely of Europeans.

On our very first voyage, despite the old scoundrel's flag, we were twice attacked by junks which he probably sent out. We sent both of them to the bottom with their crews, and, although Chee-Wing-Su must have heard of the tragedies, he passed them by without a word.

We had run three cargoes when the old fellow prepared a surprise party for us. He sent for our captain and changed the place of landing to an island about fifteen miles further south. He claimed that the officials at Shanghai had got wind of our business and had set a watch, though he and the captain did not believe the story, agreed to make the landing-place on the next voyage. We made the bay at night as we returned, but the guns were double-shotted, the muskets and pistols loaded and every man was at his post.

The first thing we knew we were surrounded by five junks, and then a fight began which lasted forty minutes. We sunk four of the junks and drove the fifth ashore, with the loss of but three men on our side.

Next day Chee-Wing-Su appeared on board and pretended to be very excited and indignant that we had been molested against his orders.

In the fight we had exterminated at least a hundred of the vermin, but had captured unhurt and were holding ten others.

To try to smooth things over with us the wily old scoundrel had the ten brought before us, read them a lesson on morality and then had their heads struck off by his own executioner.

Our landing-place was to be Yang-tse-Kiang again, and Chee-Wing-Su put up another job. To restore our confidence in him again he offered to put £500 into our next venture and draw out only a fair percentage.

This seemed like a fair thing, and it was accepted He handed over the money with promptness, and we sailed away, but when our captain had had time to turn the matter over in his mind he began to wonder and theorize.

Old Chee-Wing-Su would never have put in his money without some stronger motive than a per cent. profit.

Few Chinese ever trust a European a shilling's worth, and a man of his class must have handed over his little fortune to throw dust in our eyes. A good deal of time was given to the puzzle, but just what his scheme was could not be satisfactorily solved. We could only watch and wait and be prepared for whatever might happen.

On our return we always made port at night. When we had displayed an agreed signal, sampans came off to us and unloaded and took away the cargo, and an agent was on the spot to pay for it.

Chee-Wing-Su's agent was also there to collect his blackmail.

There would be thirty Chinamen aboard of us when discharging cargo; but, though they were a villainous lot, we felt no fear of them and did not keep the crew even under arms.

We were within a day's sail of port on our return when the captain was struck by an idea. Chee-Wing-Su knew that our cargo would be a heavy one. Suppose he should have planned to capture the clipper in harbour.

All he had to do was to put men enough aboard, and when he had exterminated the crew and taken possession who was to betray him? He had men who could sail the craft, and by giving her a new coat of paint, a new name and making some changes in her rig she could not be recognised. Even if she were, what would her owners dare do about it? To have set up a claim would have been to convict themselves of smuggling. As for wiping out a score of Europeans, he would consider that as a sort of duty under any circumstances.

Before we made harbour everything was prepared and every man instructed.

In response to our signal a dozen sampans appeared, and the first man on our decks was the rascally old Chee-

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Wing-Su. He was effusive, good-natured and as obsequious as possible. He said there was cause for haste in unloading, as the custom officials had suddenly become active, and he was permitted to order about fifty men on board to discharge the cargo. So soon as our anchor was down all but two or three of our crew disappeared, and the captain and agents sat down to a luncheon in the cabin.

Not a box had yet gone over the rail when the Chinese on deck broke loose.

In thirty seconds every man but the captain was sailing into them. They were armed with knives only, while we had cutlasses.

No firearms were used.

The fellows made a good stand for about five minutes, and then we began driving them. No quarter was given.

When the last living yellow devil went overboard, there were thirty dead ones on our decks. Of course, the row was heard in the cabin.

At the first sound Captain Walters laid his revolver on the table before him and said to Chee-Wing-Su:

"There seems to be some skylarking going on above, but we will not interfere with it."

"If my men are creating any trouble, I must go up and stop it," replied the old pirate.

"Your men are all right, and you will remain here."

They heard the sounds of battle and knew that the Chinamen were being driven overboard, but the captain talked about the voyage and the profits and pretended ignorance of the real state of affairs.

When the fight had ended, the anchor was lifted and the clipper sailed away out of the harbour. Chee-Wing-Su played the hypocrite at first. Then he blustered and threatened, and in the end he broke down, and became disgustingly abject.

The agent on board with him was in the plot. He refused to give it away at first, but when he knew that death was the alternative he talked fast enough. The game was to seize the clipper and cargo and murder us all, and if we had not been on our guard it would have been carried out to the letter.

We made a run for another port.

Chee-Wing-Su made a big offer for his life, and as a matter of law we had no right to punish him. I must tell you however, that law or no law, he was hung by the neck to the yardarm, while the agent was landed on an uninhabited island.

It was a high-handed thing to do, you will say, and yet the governor of Shanghai, who could have been bribed any time for five pounds and who hadn't an honest hair in his head, issued a proclamation and publicly thanked Providence for removing a bad man from earth.

A few months later he somehow got knowledge as to who owned the clipper, and he seemed inclined to make a fuss, but with my own hands I carried him fifty pounds, and he laughed and grinned and rubbed his hands together and let the affair drop there and then.

C. B. Lewis.

CREATION AND DESTRUCTION.

Elena Boroni stood before her mirror, her face and eyes betraying the greatest excitement. It was a great scheme, one which it pleased her fancy to carry out, and she determined to do it. But would he agree?

Could he refuse? The idea was absurd! No man would refuse to marry Elena Boroni, the accomplished *prima donna*, concerning whose exquisite singing all Italy was raving; to suppose, therefore, that Giacomo Vitala, the struggling artiste, would form an exception to the rule was ridiculous.

Elena was doubly gifted by nature; she was beautiful in face and figure, and her voice was declared by the critics to be superior to any other that had been heard in Europe during the past century. She had made her *début* one short year previously, and she was the idol of the music-loving people of sunny Italy. But she had a defect which is not uncommon among the highly gifted; she was nervous to the last degree, always wanting something fresh. Moreover, she was of a passionate temperament, quick to change from one sentiment to another, capable of loving intensely and hating fervently.

The scheme which she had imagined was this: Giacomo was a young man about her own age—twenty-four—and possessed of a voice which was capable of being made equal to her own; but he had not received proper training and this barred his chance of success. He had had a few small engagements, and she had heard him sing at a private entertainment, when she had recognised the quality of his voice. She proposed that he should marry her, that she should train his voice and then secure for him, with the aid of her undoubted influence, engagements at the best theatres and concert halls.

It was the kind of plan that would only originate in the brain of, and commend itself to, such a wilful, nervous, imperious woman as Elena Boroni; but, having conceived it, she was not likely to allow anything to prevent her from carrying it out. What a couple they would make!

With such a woman the old proverb about the will and the way holds good to the fullest extent, and she was aided in the development of her scheme by the fact that Giacomo Vitala had worshipped her in secret. In a little while the world was startled by the announcement of the marriage, and then began the preparation for the act, when they should figure as the supreme stars of the musical firmament.

Giacomo's training proceeded apace. Elena taught him with unabated zeal and watched his progress as a painter watches the evolution of the portrait which he is creating, or the sculptor watches the divine figure into which he is transforming a block of marble. Giacomo was an apt pupil—had he been otherwise the whole plan would have fallen to the ground, for Elena was not a patient woman and ill-fitted for the position of teacher: as it was, her joy and admiration—we may, perhaps, say her love—increased in accordance with his progress. He was her creation, she was bringing into existence a grand singer, just as the sculptor creates and loves the beautiful image which is gradually formed under his chisel.

"You will be great, you will be divine, my Giacomo!" she would exclaim ever and anon. "There will be none

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to compare with us; we shall stand apart from all the world, above all the world, worshipped and envied!"

Giacomo's heart swelled with pride; he would be on a level with the one whom he had worshipped—and envied! His ambition, the one desire of his life, would be gratified, and he would be one of the very few to whom it is granted to excel.

Slowly, but surely, the inevitable was approaching; Elena, in the enjoyment of her task, never imagined that she might be preparing for herself a whip that would scourge her own back. Giacomo, actuated by his all-absorbing ambition, studied and worked hard to perfect his voice for the sake of the position it would give him rather than for the pleasure it would afford to his wife. And as he approached perfection, so his worship of her, his admiration for her, dwindled away, and he began to feel that he was on a level with her.

Elena perceived nothing of this; she was as delighted as a child with the success of her experiment, and when at length the time arrived when she could obtain an engagement for him with the certainty that he would be immediately successful, her joy was unbounded. Her creation was complete; she had made a great singer and she was happy.

On the night of his first appearance—for she ignored his earlier efforts—she was not content to remain on the side of the stage; she must have a box, so that she might witness the triumph to the full. Her triumph! Giacomo had no personality for her; he was her toy, and any triumph that resulted from a display of his ability was hers.

Giacomo's singing created a sensation, and his reputation was assured. From all parts of Italy came offers of high fees for his appearance at concerts and equally advantageous proposals to take various leading parts in well-known operas. Elena and he played together and sang together, and became the leading lights of the musical world, as they had anticipated. For four months this continued, and then there came a change.

Elena perceived with growing dissatisfaction that her husband's reputation and popularity were exceeding her own. She could not realise this at first, and smiled at the absurdity of the idea that had crossed her mind; but, as time went on, the suspicion became a certainty, and she turned pale and cold with anger and jealousy. Giacomo himself furnished proof of the truth of her conviction, for, feeling that he had attained his ambition, his sentiments towards her underwent a change, and he wished that he were free. She was always with him, depriving him of the full extent of the glory that should come to him; he wanted to appear alone so that he might overshadow all. How can the full light of a star be seen when another star of equal—nay, almost equal—magnitude is shining near it?

Giacomo was surpassing her! This was a condition that she had never imagined, and once she was sure of it Elena set to work to undo what she had done. Fierce jealousy and hatred consumed her until it was with difficulty that she restrained herself from putting an end to this competition by violence. The dagger or poison would have been easy methods of regaining her supremacy, but there were two objections—Giacomo would never know that his light had failed, and the consequences to herself would be serious. Some other method must be adopted.

She must ruin him by destroying the fulness and richness of his voice, pretending all the time to be stricken with grief at the deterioration, and encouraging him to persevere and to fulfil the engagements which she would assist in obtaining for him. She would allow him to sing apart from her, in order that she might from a private box enjoy the full measure of his humiliation and misery. As she had raised, so she would degrade him.

She employed every insidious artifice which her cunning brain could originate; she mixed drugs in his drinks and in his food, contrived that he should be exposed to unfavourable weather and draughts, and incited him by artfully-uttered taunts to strain his voice in practise at the very time when he should have nursed it. In this way also she made him fulfil engagements when his voice was not in a fit condition, and thus began her task of humiliating him and ruining his reputation.

Giacomo was so filled with pride about his own accomplishments that he could not imagine a fall from his high estate; he therefore fell readily into the traps set for him by Elena, and shut his eyes to signs of disapproval that were obvious to everyone else.

Step by step the descent was made; offers came less quickly, and Elena had to exert all her influence to obtain them. When she judged the time ripe for so doing, she changed her tactics, and began to make stinging remarks to Giacomo concerning the decline of his popularity and the failure of his voice; but this was not done in too pronounced a manner. Secretly enraged by these taunts, Giacomo sang in public at every opportunity, giving his services in aid of charitable institutions and singing at church, so that he might keep himself well to the front. All this merely aided the development of Elena's scheme.

He was engaged for a grand evening concert at Milan, and Elena seized this opportunity to compass his final overthrow. She had declined to sing herself on some pretext, and occupied a prominent position in the theatre. Anyone observing her closely would have noticed that her face betrayed considerable anxiety, and that she cast many and frequent glances at all parts of the auditorium.

Giacomo appeared and sang; his voice was in a distinctly bad condition and those among the audience who had admired him at his best were pained at the change and murmured to themselves, or to one another, their regret that he had not declined to appear. Elena's face changed continually in expression, when she looked at Giacomo there was triumph in it, but when she turned to the audience there was anxiety.

At last the song was finished. Giacomo's few friends heaved sighs of relief as the last notes were uttered. But suddenly, as Giacomo was about to bow before retiring a volume of hisses burst upon his ears. They came from all parts of the house, and seemed to lash him like so many whips; he started, turned deathly pale and glared about him. Then his wild eyes rested on the triumphant face of Elena and he seemed to comprehend it all. With one hand clutching his forehead he staggered from the stage.

On the following day the newspapers contained a report of an outrage on Elena Boroni—she was still known in the profession by her maiden name; she had been discovered senseless on the floor of her room at the hotel, her face disfigured by a terrible wound, which would prevent her from ever again appearing on the stage. She could not say positively who her assailant was, but she did not hesitate to give expression to her suspicion. Giacomo disappeared after the concert, and was never heard of again.

GEORGE KNIGHT.

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FORE-ARMED.

SARA FORESTER, rising from the writing-table in the oriel window and giving an admiring glance at the stately proportions of "Sir Walter's Room," wondered for the second time as she crossed its breadth to go downstairs for tea, that the nerves of Lord and Lady Selhurst should be weaker than their appreciation of the beauties of so fine an "interior," was strong. They had arrived at Carmel Abbey, she had learnt, before luncheon, to increase and perfect one of the house parties Lady Lucy Gascoigne was fond of collecting together from Monday till Saturday in the country, but within an hour of their arrival had heard through the gossip of a maid that the room they had been installed in, was reported to be haunted, and had transferred themselves to a modest room in the west corridor destined for Sara herself. Sara, arriving later, found herself in succession to their retreat, possessed of the importance attaching to the tenant of the state-room on the central staircase, next to that of her host and hostess, a position, as false ones often are, essentially, if ephemerally, desirable.

The laughter and gossip of a mixed party greeted her as she entered the oak parlour. The house party completed by the recent return of the hunting contingent, was broken up into knots.

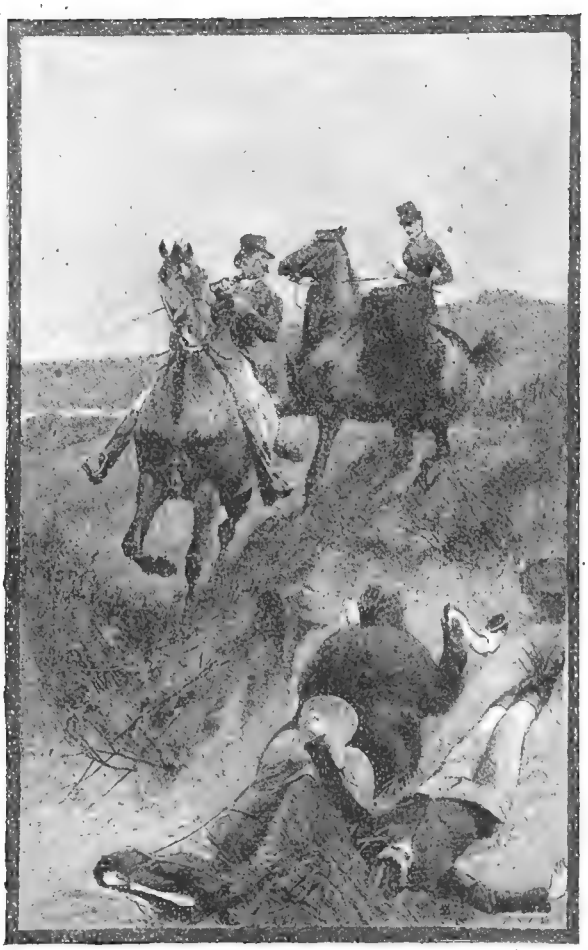
More than one group of men lounged about the room where a side-table, supplied with liqueurs, spirits, and potash, supplemented the tea and cakes that were calculated to last the ladies long beyond any legitimate dinner-hour. To the two or three in attendance at the tea-table, was added at the hostess's summons, a fair man, the perfect fit of whose cords and tops detracted indirectly from his undeniable good looks, by necessarily dividing any appreciative observer's attention with them.

"Come and tell Miss Forester about to-day's sport and to-morrow's fixture, Captain Gower," called out Lady Lucy, "she is our riding lady."

Captain Gower, between draughts of whiskey and seltzer, plunged at once into descriptive detail, while, with the double action of which bright wits are capable, he criticised Sara's expressive face, deciding half-a-dozen times, in less minutes, for and against her claims to beauty. On his own possession of it, every woman he had ever met had decided as she bowed to him, but he had the indifference to abstract beauty not uncommon with men possessed of it in an unusual degree, and Miss Forester's piquant face, with its wide mouth, short nose, and square little chin, took his fancy strongly.

"It's a big country," he said, "and you will like it. Does Gascoigne mount you? Ah, then you will be sure to go. Lady Lucy, what does Miss Forester ride to-morrow?"

"Don't ask *me!*" answered his hostess in her high-pitched, merry voice. "I know *nothing*, ask Frank. By the way, isn't he in?"



They found him at the bottom of the gravel pit, side by side with his horse.

"We left him at the 'Coach and Horses,'" laughed Captain Gower in return. "He says there is only one thing he can't get in his own house—a decent glass of beer."

"Was Charles Benham out to-day?" asked a new arrival.

"Out and got a crashing fall; no bones broken, though. It ought to frank him for the rest of the season, I suppose?"

"Should do," said Fred Somers. "By the way, who is his heir when he comes to his inevitable end? does anyone know? He has no near relation."

"I am willing to run for it," observed Captain Gower, glancing at Sara by an impulse for which he would have been puzzled to account. "Who'll back me for the prize? I've never seen the man, understand."

"Ten thousand to one against it," said Fred Somers.

"Not a sovereign more than fifty," corrected Mrs. Mercer, a lively *habituee* of country houses. "All the world knows Captain Gower's luck, and that the only certainty is what is unexpected."

"My chance should be better," said Lewis Gascoigne, a younger brother of the squire. "We were

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all one two hundred years ago; more by token Benham grows more like our mutual great-grandfather every day."

"The likeness to Sir Walter is very striking," added Lady Lucy. "They were all talking of it last time he dined here."

Miss Forester, though a little puzzled, listened to these furtive remarks with interest. The subject of them was known to her by name through a family feud, which had hitherto made any mention of it sound like a fog horn through the dense moral atmosphere bound to prevail at the time.

Her father and the Benhams had been cousins, but she was entirely ignorant of the cause of an estrangement so complete that in the second generation Charles' ownership of an estate in North Midshire had been a reason for Mr. Forester objecting to his daughter's visit in the same county. It is not necessary to particularize it here.

The origin of a family feud is wont to be insignificant and have its root in some spirit of greed or vanity that has spread from its root to a size that alone gives it importance.

Whether a question of game preserving, legacy hunting, or trespass, the feud has thriven and spread, and for years the Foresters and Benhams had only had that kind of interest in each other that a Servian may have in Bulgar, or some pious theologian in the devil. It is necessary to know the enemy's position.

Youth being at its best perverse, Charles Benham and his bruising form of horsemanship was still occupying a place in her thoughts when, after the distractions of comic songs, dressing, and a parade across two intervening reception-rooms, Sara found herself at eight o'clock seated next to Captain Gower before a pile of moss, ferns, and flowers, called conventionally the dinner-table.

An old acquaintance sat on her left hand, and it was not until the meal was half over that her new friend succeeded in attracting her attention. Then, with his eyes lifted to a painting on the opposite panel, he called her attention to it by the trivial-sounding remark:

"I have never made up my mind as to the taste that hangs one's ancestors as permanent witnesses of one's greediness."

"You wouldn't have family portraits in a dining-room, you mean," asked Sara.

"Yes; wasn't it put well?"

"Very," she answered, laughing, "in the form of a problem. But why should they be out of place?"

"Don't let us argue; but doesn't that handsome fellow opposite look supercilious, as if, having known the table loaded with sirloins and nut brown ale, he despised made dishes and hot-house flowers? I thought so last night."

"It is a beautiful face. Who is it?"

"Some ancestor of the Gascoignes, I know, and that's all. It's a face that sticks by one somehow, but you prefer blue eyes to brown?"

"Yes," she said simply, and then catching sight of the flash in his own, saw she had fallen into a trap. Nevertheless, for a few minutes the impression of his face drove from her mind the stronger one the portrait had produced.

The pictured cavalier regained his ascendancy later, however, and though the talk drifted down an easy current to the field and the chase, the grave eyes surmounting the straight lines of nose and moustache rested upon Sara throughout the meal, consciously to herself,

THIRTY SEALED ENVELOPES CLAIMED.

£300 ALREADY PAID.

THE Editor of *Pearson's Weekly* has sent out fifty men, each with a Sealed Envelope containing a letter entitling the recipient to the sum of £10. To secure one of these Envelopes it is only necessary to ask one of the Ten-Pound Men the question, "Have you got that Ten-Pound Note?" and at the same time to show a current copy of *Pearson's Weekly*. Full details of the scheme will be sent on application to Room 36, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

TEN TEN-POUND LADIES

have also been dispatched all over the country, each of whom will deliver up the Sealed Envelope to the lady who fulfills the conditions mentioned in *Pearson's Weekly*. No gentlemen need apply.

Copies of the song, "Have You Got that Ten-Pound Note?" are now ready, and may be obtained from all music-sellers and newsagents for 1s. 4d., or direct from the Song Department, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., for 1s. 6d. Postal Order (not stamps) post free.

A prize of £10 is offered to the person from whom we receive the best anecdote relating to the Ten-Pound scheme. All attempts should be sent in envelopes addressed: TEN-POUND STORY EDITOR, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., before Monday, November 19th.

The following are the names and addresses of the winners of Ten-Pound Notes up to the time of going to press:

READING (No. 46).—In Market Square after football match, by Mr. R. Willoughby, Grove House, Vicarage Road, Teddington.
NORWICH (No. 1).—By Mr. H. E. Baker, 4 Beaconsfield Road.
LUDGATE HILL STATION (No. 33).—By Mr. John Lotan, 22 St. Anne's Chambers, E.C.
SOUTHEND (No. 27).—On the cliffs, by Mr. Charles Lee, 1 Agnes Terrace, St. Mary's Avenue.
WIMBLEDON (No. 36).—By Mr. R. Gautier, 132 Clarence Road.
BRIXTON, LONDON (No. 30).—In a private house, by Mr. W. W. Tonkin, 5 Grove Road, S.W.
SOUTHAMPTON (No. 12).—In a hotel smoking-room, by Mr. Charles Wright, 30 Oxford Gardens, N. Kensington.
LINCOLN (No. 9).—On a motor, by E. C. Baldock, 68 Portland St.
WORCESTER (No. 3).—By Mr. A. Welling, 12 The Foregate.
CITY ROAD, E.C. (No. 10).—By Mr. A. Bowman, 413 City Road.
PRESTON (No. 23).—In the street, by Mr. William H. Wayne, 19 Hurstfinch Road, St. Helens.
ST. ALBAN'S (No. 11).—By Mr. John Roe, Hatfield Road School.
SHEPTON MALLET (No. 40).—In the George Hotel, by Mr. W. Cotton, Coxbridge Street, Pennard, Glastonbury.
PLYMOUTH (No. 18).—In Union Street, by Mr. R. J. Martyn, 4 Albert Road, Morice Town, Devonport.
TEIGNMOUTH (No. 8).—By Mr. W. G. Hole, Teignmouth.
MOTHERWELL, N.B. (No. 44).—In the street, by Mr. Archibald Brown, Market Place, Carluke.
SAWBRIDGEWORTH (No. 21).—On a 'bus, by Mr. Albert T. Page, Sawbridgeworth, Herts.
MUSWELL HILL (No. 28).—In the street, by Mr. James L. W. Ash, 34 Cricketfield Road, Hackney Downs.
MAIDSTONE (No. 15).—In the post-office, by Mr. Charles W. Ward, 30 Milton Street, Maidstone.
EXETER (No. 19).—On station platform, by Mr. Albert House, 8 Lansdowne Terrace, Holloway Street.
TRAFALGAR SQUARE, LONDON (No. 5).—In Trafalgar Square, by Miss May Grammer, 154 Elgin Avenue, Maida Vale.
CROUCH END, LONDON (No. 37).—£10 card, in a private house by Mr. J. D. Southall, 38 Rosebery Gardens, Crouch End.
DUBLIN (No. 38).—At Nelson's Pillar, by Mrs. S. Fitzpatrick, 13 Killarney Parade, Dublin.
KINGSLAND, LONDON (No. 6).—£10 card, in a tobacconist's shop by Mrs. Pezaro, 86 High Street, Kingsland.
EASTBOURNE (No. 42).—£10 card, in a grocer's shop, by Miss Winifred Eldridge, 337 Seaside, Eastbourne.
GLASGOW (No. 43).—In the Central Station, by Miss Annie Hamilton, 12 Blythswood Drive, Glasgow.
LOUGHBOROUGH (No. 2).—£10 card, in a tobacconist's shop, by Mr. George Tyler, 35 Cattle Market, Loughborough.
TRAFALGAR SQUARE, LONDON (No. 20).—In Trafalgar Square, by Mrs. K. Redgrave, 14 Burnley Road, Stockwell.
BELFAST (No. 47).—At Oval football match, by Mr. John N. O'Hara, Grand Hotel Metropole, Belfast.
RUNCORN (No. 29).—£10 card in house, by Miss Kathleen Ormsby, Tower House, Greenway Road.

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and followed her from the room with lingering watchfulness.

Lady Lucy, from the head of the table, was unconscious of Sara's divided interests. "That won't do at all," she thought, with a nod of her clever head that fortunately accentuated a political formula her neighbour was at the moment propounding.

"A younger son, and Sara without the ghost of a fortune except what she can get by marrying." Nevertheless, she was regretting the rigidity of the social necessities that frowned upon what she conceived was a mutual liking; though she was not going to yield her present scheme, now brought to its inital stage, without trouble, which was nothing less than the healing of a family feud and the marriage of a penniless girl to her wealthy cousin. Just now Rupert Gower looked like standing in Charles Benham's light.

Sara, unconscious of the game in which she was being played, went up to her room that night after an evening merry enough to have made her forget its character, and prepared for sleep with no more serious reflection than that suggested by the sight of the hunting kit set out for her use next morning.

She lay down in the canopied bed without noticing the waving of the tapestry that the draught from the chimney occasioned, and fell asleep at once.

The hall clock was striking three on a deep toned bell when she awoke, suddenly and completely. The firelight gleaming red and dull, only half lighted the moulded ceiling and heavily hung walls, but as she turned on her elbow away from it, a cavern of coals fell in and flamed up from the hollow with a glare as bright as day.

The figure of a man stood in the full light, his eyes fixed on her own. It was a steady, unemotional gaze, that precluded any suggestion of fear or surprise, and she returned it with a vague feeling of expecting him to speak. His face, with its dark eyes, seemed familiar, and as she looked she saw that he was the cavalier of the dining-room portrait,—but dressed and with the same perfection of detail—as Captain Gower had been when she met him a few hours earlier in the tea-room. His hunting crop was in his hand and his head was bare; a red line crossed one temple, and he raised his hand to it as he spoke: "The pace is tremendous," he said in a level and somewhat harsh voice. "Lie well away to my right."

"When?" Sara asked, and could neither have accounted for the question or its form.

"You hear the time," answered the young man. "His point Markdean. You will remember."

There was a long pause, during which his gaze seemed to sadden to the intensity of Vandyke's portrait, following Sara's as she dropped back at last on her pillow with the same wistful expression with which the pictured eyes had seemed to watch her from the dining-room.

She raised herself again. "You are hurt?" she asked involuntarily, for she did not feel as if he needed help.

"It is a mere nothing," he answered, "and the end is near."

There was such an intensity of expression in the harsh tones that Sara covered her face in her hands and shivered. When she looked up again, the place where he had stood was empty.

She was fully awake, and she set herself to consider whom she had seen and why he came. Real and yet unreal, alive and yet a figure of the past, his presence had been a fact and no dream. How had he entered the room, how left it, and who was he? No inhabitant of the Abbey, certainly no visitor; a modern sportsman as to his dress, an ancestor of the house by his features. Sara's conjectures became confusion, and she fell asleep.

The ideal hunting morning of song is not necessarily productive of good scent; nevertheless, proverbial sayings have weight, and the bitterness of a whistling north-easter is intensified by its direct opposition to accepted perfection in winds. A north-east wind with a rising glass was, it is true, approved of Huntsman Goodall, but when the Carmel party mounted on January 13th, the glass was, as it chanced, falling, and the biting wind was ferretting for its victims in every corner of the cloistered quadrangle. Rupert Gower lifted Sara on to her horse with an expression that was less orthodox than forcible, and during the short ride to covert divided his remarks between abuse of the blast and equivocal encomiums on his hunter.

"Grand water-jumper, but won't face timber; as fast as the mail, but pulls like anything; capital in dirt but money thrown away if you get on the hills," all of which pullings-off from the horse's value would have remained unrecorded in another mood.

Fred Somers, on Sara's other side, rode with his hat crammed down upon his head and the lids of his eyes lowered, so that their unfailing twinkle was invisible; but now and then a word of chaff, directed to Gower, escaped him, showing his cheerful spirit was undaunted; and, indeed, as one of that noble army of martyrs, "a one-horse," he was inevitably keen upon even the off-chance of sport.

The day was so opposed to social amenities that the Master put his hounds into Lower Shaw with exceptional punctuality, and the Carmel party, coming up ten minutes late, found the field scattered to likely positions for getting away.

Half-a-dozen foxes were on foot at once, but none seemed inclined to face the open, and the first hour and a half was spent in the woodlands with nothing more satisfactory to show for it than spasmodic, ringing runs along and across the rides, with a chopped fox as the result.

The master then made a move for a small wood at a distance of three miles, which lay in a promising hollow, was unexceptional in its harbour of a stout fox, and offered the best chance he could give his hounds of sport for the day.

Pipe's Spinney was, however, for once drawn blank, and a neighbouring gorse proved as unsatisfactory, while another draw roused a fox that took them straight back to Lower Shaw and was lost.

The fifteen minutes served to warm the blood of horses and men, and though there were some defections on the part of those who thought to save their horses for a better day, a strong field took the chance of an improvement in the afternoon, and followed the Master as he led them at a sharp pace towards a covert lying on the edge of his country known as "The Wilderness."

"The day seems changing," said Fred Somers, riding up to Miss Forester's side as they reached it, "and I suspect we've got one chance. This is the stiffest side, and if you like timber and we get away you'll be in luck. Your horse likes it I know."

Sara was just beginning a remark about the sudden dropping of the wind, and what was to follow, when a fox stole out of the covert a hundred yards in front of them, and with a sudden crash of music half the pack were at his brush.

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"In luck, and no mistake!" said cheery Fred, ramming his hunting-flask into its case, while his companion sat down and let her horse go. For ten minutes the pace was fast enough to tell on the worst mounted, and when they checked on the plough and the first flight got a pull at their horses, Sara found herself one of half-a-dozen where fifty had been. Her host, Frank Gascoigne, was up, as were the Master and his wife, Gower, Fred Somers, and a powerfully built young man on a white-legged bay, for which Sara recalled having seen him, in the distance, exchange a clever cob he had been riding in the morning.

He was in front of her, and she was contrasting the ease of his seat with his breadth and apparent weight when Gertrude made certain of Bajazets' challenge, and the hounds swinging unexpectedly towards her drew a remark from the Master that gave her a shock of recognition.

"Markdean, as I'm alive!" he said to his wife.

"Never knew a wilderness fox make that point before," and then, with "Markdean!" in her ears, Sara found herself riding at a high thorn fence that was awkwardly broken by hedgerow timber.

Her perfectly-bitted horse flew it between two closely planted oaks, landing her in a grass field that was divided along its breadth by a stiff post and rails, over which she followed Fred Somers, all unconscious that Gower's anticipated failure at timber was to be localised by a heavy roll over behind her at the spot where she had had it.

She was on good terms with hounds, and had the quasi-satisfaction of seeing three riders drop back to her, while she and the Master, who was fifty yards in advance of her, followed the line at a pace that, good as it was, was unavailing to prevent the distance increasing between them and the flying hounds.

The "pace was tremendous." The phrase occurred to her just as the thundering of coming hoofs in the hard turf of the hillside they were breasting made her look round.

The white-legged weight carrier plunged past her, and as he did so the rider turned in his saddle and looked at her.

He had lost his hat as his horse crashed through the tree boughs at the thorn fence, and the broken cord was dangling at his back; his head was uncovered, and as he rode by, his forehead showed a sharp line across one side, where a branch had cut it.

He raised his hand to it, and as he did so Sara saw he was the horseman of her vision, even to the details of the low-growing hair and the expression of his eyes. At the same time his was the face of the dining-room portrait alive before her

Her horse sprang jealously after his, and for some seconds they were riding side by side, stretching up the sharp pitch that led to the sheep-grazed table-land across which the hounds were streaming. Her companion never turned his head, and yet as they galloped the words of the night before came to her as plainly as if he had spoken them. "Lie well away to my right. Remember."

The hounds were inclining to the left, when, far away down the opposite slope of the hill and blue with distance—an open, well-fenced country lying between—lay the dark line of Markdean Wood.

The Master was out of sight. Sure of his point, he had slipped down the hillside, and was riding to nick in with his hounds, while in the plain below a little knot of skirters were bent on overtaking him for the sake of his lead.

HE DIDN'T EAT THE DONKEY.

Ah, there's where it is, you see. It's not the work so much as the worry that knocks us out and sends us prowling about after drugs and doctors.

But how are we going to stave off the worry? You'll have to ask that question of a wiser chap than I am; it beats me.

"It was worry," Mr. Salsbury says, "that told on my health—worry and anxiety over my business. I got into a very low and depressed condition; the energy and snap seemed clean gone out of me. I was worried about this too—one worry on top of another.

"So I did what anybody would, in that shape; I went to see a doctor. He appeared bothered to tell what ailed me, and finally said he thought I was suffering from a weak heart, and gave me medicine on that theory.

"It did me no good, however, and I only grew weaker and more nervous than I was before. I was very constipated and my appetite kept dwindling away until there was hardly a rag of it left. I have heard of people starving from lack of victuals, and here I was—starving from lack of desire for food and power to digest it. In the end it's all the same.

"At last the doctor gave me some medicine to salivate me. It made my head, from the crown to below the eyes, quite black; and also my hands as far as the wrists. I can assure you I was a sight to look at."

Mercury, probably. A dangerous thing to put inside the human body. A man who knew what he was talking about once wrote a piece of poetry on this medicine. Here are the last four lines:

"And when I must resign my breath,
Pray let me die a natural death,
And bid the world a long farewell
Without one dose of calomel."

So say we all of us.

"I got so weak I could hardly lift my hands," adds Mr. Salsbury. "Then something helpful happened. A man threw into my house a pamphlet telling of Mother Seigel's Syrup. I read the book and sent for the Syrup, and on going to bed I took a big dose—away beyond the directions—a teaspoonful and a half. In the early morning my bowels were opened *for the first time in a week*.

"Then I felt hungry and told my wife *I could eat a donkey and half his breakfast*, but I contented myself with a meal easier of digestion. After that I got my strength and spirits back like hauling in a line.

"When the doctor called again he said: 'My word! but you are picking up.' I was, but the remedy was Mother Seigel's Syrup. After two bottles I was all right, and tackled by business with a light heart. All this came to pass when I lived in Grimsby."—W. G. Salsbury, Upgate, Louth, Lincs., December 19th, 1899.

Mr. Salsbury is now manager of Bellamy Brothers, Mineral Waters Manufactory, Upgate, Louth, and is well known there.

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Sara and her companion were alone on the line, which led straight over the plateau, and down the further slope of the hill. He glanced back at her once as he topped a stone wall, though the plunging movement of his horse he could neither check nor guide called for all his attention. At the same moment a church clock in the valley struck three, and turning away from him, Sara was soon well away to his right, and on the right of the line of hounds.

She saw him no more.

Down the hill again, she was able to improve her position and ultimately, after another forty minutes of steady riding, in which the skirters had the best of it, she came up with the fast converging field, just as the hounds ran their fox into Markdean Wood in the South Midshire country. There he went to earth, and as it was impossible to dig and the horses had had enough, the Master, mindful of the time and of the fifteen miles that lay between him and his kennels, gave the word for home. As he did so, he glanced round.

"Where's Benham?" he said to Fred Somers, who was mounting again for the ride back.

"He followed the line up the hill, I fancy," returned Fred. "I have not seen him since the young one bolted with him, just after the hounds picked up the scent again."

"He's mad to ride that horse, I told him so," observed a member of the hunt. "He'll bring him to grief inevitably."

"I should shoot him at once," said another.

"Or send him up to Tattersall's 'to carry a lady,'" grinned Fred.

Rupert Gower looked at Sara.

"Was that your bruising cousin, then?" he asked. "You saw him last, I suppose?"

"He was riding the line to a yard, straight over the hill," said Sara. "I was on his right."

The Master turned in his saddle.

"Hounds skirted the gravel-pits," he said quickly. "I wish I had a horse to send back. With that young one he might be killed."

"He was quite out of hand," returned Sara, changing colour. "Captain Gower, can't we go back? My horse can do it, I am sure."

"Of course, if you wish it," Rupert returned. "We are miles from home, and Benham, I should fancy, is the sort of man to be able to look after himself; but——"

"Come," she said, and swung off at a trot.

* * * * *

They found him at the bottom of the gravel pit, side by side with his horse. He lay quietly on his back, with no appearance of injury, but his neck was broken; the horse, with a fractured shoulder, was a few feet from him, as if the violence of the shock on landing had crippled him, and the half roll-over unseating his rider, Benham had been pitched on the head, never to move again.

It seemed to Sara, as she sat by him with his head on her lap, while Rupert rode off through the falling rain for assistance, as if the only duty she could now do him softened the remembrance of the feud with which he was associated, and as she closed the eyes that had looked so strangely at her, the tears that fell from her own, if partly the result of physical fatigue and excitement, came chiefly at the thought that the pluck of the dead man before her must certainly have won for him her obstinate father's liking, if circumstances had not stood all his life in the way of their meeting. She was too kind-hearted not to regret the past ill-feeling, which looked as ill-feeling does when viewed by the strong light of eternity, small and pitiful to a retrospective eye.

So Charles Benham died and was buried, and Rupert Gower reigned in his stead. The will, upon which the Carmel guests had speculated idly, proved to be made absolutely in favour of the young cousin Charles had never wittingly seen and Sara found herself, as his heir, a rich woman and owner of the best appointed hunting-box in North Midshire.

Mrs. Mercer hugged herself on her acute reduction of the odds against Rupert, but Lady Lucy, who was speculative, puzzled herself untiringly over the appearance of Sir Walter Gascoigne, in the form of Charles Benham, to Sara in the room he had always been traditionally said to haunt.

Sara herself did not care to talk of it. The story was a tragic one to her, despite its happy ending, and for years she carefully avoided the hill where, one January afternoon, the sharp report of a gun had seemed to divide her life into two parts, as its charge sent the half-broken hunter to follow the Master whose death he had occasioned, into the unknown land.

AMES SAVILE.

MRS. SNIFFWELL: "Why, Bridget, you have been eating onions!"

Bridget: "Shure, mum, you're a moind reader!"

"SHE's a woman for people to rave over."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; she lives in a flat and practises singing six hours a day."

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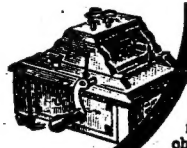

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For MARCH, 1901.

25,602 PRIZES, value £10,000

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1	Cash Prize, £40	40 0
10	Handsome Pianos, in walnut, £40 each	400 0
5	Cash Prizes, £25 each ...	125 0
10	Gents' Bicycles, Freewheels, £17 17s.	178 10
10	Ladies' Bicycles, Freewheels, £17 17s.	178 10
10	Cash Prizes, £10 each ...	100 0
20	Jones's Sewing Machines, £8 each	160 0
20	Cash Prizes, £5 each ...	100 0
50	Rolled Gold Lever Watches, £2 10s. each	125 0
100	Cash Prizes, £2 each ...	200 0
50	Dinner Services (56 pieces), £2 each	100 0
50	Folding Bed Chairs, £2 each	100 0
50	Ladies' Travelling Trunks, £2 each	100 0
200	Cash Prizes, £1 each ...	200 0
200	Ladies' Leather Hatboxes, £1 each	200 0
100	Basket Arm Chairs, upholstered, £1	100 0
400	pairs Blankets, 15s. per pair	300 0
200	½-doz Electro-plated Forks, large, 15s. per ½ doz. ...	150 0
200	½-doz. Electro-plated Forks, small, 15s. per ½-doz. ...	£150 0
500	Ladies' Umbrellas, 15/- ea.	375 0
500	Gents' Umbrellas, 15s. each	375 0
400	Best Electro-plated Teapots, 15s. each	300 0
400	Handsome Meat Carvers, with Steel in Case, 15s. set	300 0
1000	Cash Prizes, 10s. each ...	500 0
1000	pairs Bed Sheets 10s. each	500 0
1000	White Linen Table Cloths, 10s. each	500 0
1000	Ladies' Umbrellas, 7/6 each	375 0
1000	Ladies' Leather Purses, 7/6 each	375 0
200	½-doz. Table Knives, 7/6 per ½-doz.	75 0
200	½-doz. Dessert do., 7/6 per ½-doz.	75 0
2000	Ladies' Dress Lengths, Navy Blue Serge, 7/6 each...	750 0
2000	Cash Prizes of 5s. each ...	500 0
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4000	½-doz. Fine Linen Cambric Handkerchiefs, 2/6 per ½-doz.	500 0
4000	Handsome Work-boxes, 2/6 each	500 0
25,602		**£10,000 0**

CONDITIONS OF COMPETITION.

Every tablet of **Watson's Matchless Cleanser** is enclosed in a Wrapper, with signature up the centre of same. Save the WHOLE Wrapper (tops of Wrappers will be disqualified), and send, postage or carriage paid, to **Joseph Watson & Sons Limited, Whitehall Soap Works, Leeds,** not later than MARCH 31ST, 1901. Each package will be counted as one lot; separate entries must be sent under separate covers. If any parcel arrives, postage or carriage not being fully paid, such parcel will be refused. Be careful to see that the full postage is paid. Each parcel sent in must contain the full name and address of sender, and number of Wrappers sent in must be marked on the same paper. On outside of parcel write legibly "**Prize Competition.**" The prizes will be awarded in the above order to the senders of the highest numbers of Wrappers. A list, giving result of the Competition, will be sent with each prize when it is sent out. Every wrapper must have first contained soap. No employes of Joseph Watson & Sons Limited will be eligible. All prizes will be despatched about April 25th.

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Transposed Letter Competition.

First Prize	**£5.**
Second Prize	**£2.**
Third Prize	**£1.**

LIST No. 2.

AENP; GRLO; HSTU; EILV.

Here are four sets of letters, and prizes will be awarded to the competitors who send in the longest words containing the letters in each of their combinations.

For example, the following words contain the letters IST in their different combinations: fIST, ITSelf, SIT, STIpend, ouTSIde, adverTISe.

CONDITIONS.

1. Write your attempts on one side of the paper only, and keep until two other lists have appeared.

2. All words must appear in Nuttall's Standard Dictionary.

3. The letters of the combinations must either be underlined or put in capitals in the words in which they occur.

4. In the event of a tie, the prize will be divided.

5. The Editor's decision is final, and competitors must enter on that understanding.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 229 to 234.

THE prize of £2 has been awarded this week to Mr. Percy Longhurst, of The Nook, Sutton, Surrey, his attempt being the first correct one dealt with.

A copy of "Hagar of Homerton," by Mrs. H. E. Dudeney, has been sent to each of the following:

C. D. Stephens, Fratton, Portsmouth.
J. M. Child, Clarence Street, Derby.
D. G. Jelley, Cantwell Road, Plumstead.
Miss Emma Cheil, Gillingham Road, Gillingham.
A. Gresham, Bradstock Road, South Hackney.
C. H. Poynter, Exmoor Road, Southampton.
W. Gyde, Warley, Essex.
H. F. Birch, Boleyn Road, Stoke Newington, N.
F. Lucas, Paynes Road, Freemantle, Hants.
W. H. Glover, Brundrett's Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy.

SOLUTION OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 235 to 240.

No. 235.

A R E A
R O A N
E A S T
A N T W E R P
E M I R
R I P E
P R E Y

No. 236.

C has M
H ydr A
A nge R
U tte R
C orollar Y
E lb A
R ampan T

No. 237. 660 inverted becomes 990, which, being divided by 3 fives 330, i.e., the half of 660.

No. 238.

L y R e
E m B roil
O r I son
H e N na Heilbron.

No. 239. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

No. 240. Bon-bon.

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Because it keeps the hair and scalp cool and clean, *allays irritation*, and keeps the hair in whatever position desired.

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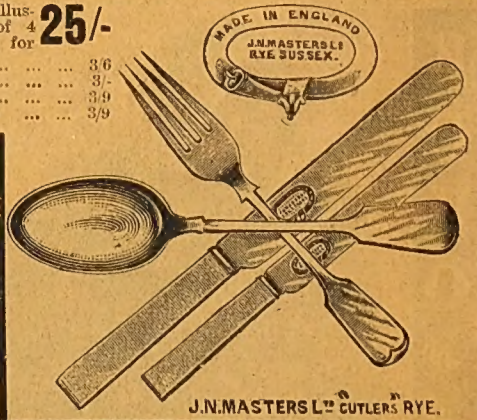

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